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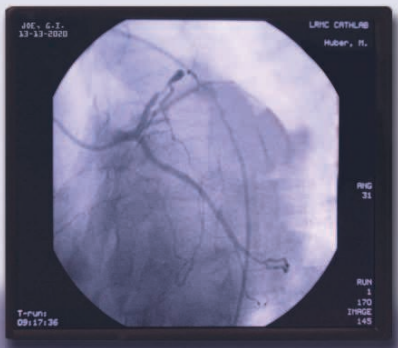
SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2005

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War wears on older troops

Number of deployed reservists brings more age-related, noncombat ailments

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Maj. William Wolfe, 47, a reservist with the 1185th Transportation Terminal Brigade out of Lancaster, Pa., speaks with Dr. (Col.) Randolph Modlin, chief cardiologist at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. Doctors are seeing more noncombat ailments specific to older servicemembers. Wolf experienced chest pains in Kuwait. Top right: Coronary angiograms, a type of X-ray of the heart, are taken of a patient recommended for heart surgery.

PHOTOS BY RUSS RIZZO/Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Embattled Colorado professor: Settlement talks between the University of Colorado and the professor who compared some Sept. 11 victims to a notorious Nazi broke down Friday after a newspaper reported the teacher had once been accused of plagiarism.

David Lane, attorney for ethnic studies professor Ward Churchill, said the school broke off the talks, which were prompted by Churchill's 2001 essay calling some World Trade Center victims "little Eichmanns," a reference to Adolf Eichmann, who orchestrated the Holocaust.

University regent Michael Carrigan declined to comment on the negotiations but said he had "substantial concern" about a report in Friday's Rocky Mountain News in Denver that Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia had accused Churchill of plagiarizing the work of a professor eight years ago.

Former detectives linked to mob: Two former New York detectives accused of carrying out Mafia executions and supplying mob bosses with the names of informants were ordered Friday to be held without bail pending trial in New York.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Lawrence R. Leavitt said Louis Eppolito and his former partner, Stephen Caraballo, would pose a serious threat if granted bail.

The pair, who were arrested Wednesday night in Las Vegas, will be transferred to New York.

Internet fraud scheme: The self-acknowledged mastermind behind an international scheme that bilked 15,000 investors of nearly \$60 million was sentenced Friday in Sacramento, Calif., to 10 years in federal prison.

In 1999, Alvin Richard Waage created Tri-West Investment Club, which prosecutors say was an Internet-based Ponzi scheme that used money from new investors to pay older investors from around the world who were guaranteed a high return at no risk.

Mass. gay marriages: A 1913 law the state is using to ban gay marriages by nonresidents should apply only when the couples are from states that expressly forbid the practice, gay-rights advocates said in a brief filed Friday with Massachusetts' highest court.

The law, which bans marriages in Massachusetts if a couple's home state doesn't sanction the union, has been in dispute since the nation's only state-sanctioned same-sex weddings began taking place last May.

Md. newspaper dispute: Maryland's biggest newspaper said Friday it will take its First Amendment fight with Gov. Robert Ehrlich to a federal appeals court next week unless the two sides can reach a settlement. The Baltimore Sun has until Wednesday to appeal a Feb. 14 federal court ruling that dismissed the paper's lawsuit challenging an Ehrlich order that barred state employees from talking to two Sun writers.

Blake murder trial: Jurors in the Robert Blake murder trial ended a week of deliberations on Friday without reaching a verdict.

The panel was ordered to resume deliberations.



Anthrax cleanup: The post office in Hamilton, N.J., will reopen Sunday for the first time since October 2001, when the sort facility was found to be contaminated with anthrax spores. In the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, anthrax-laced letters bearing Trenton postmarks were sent to members of Congress and Tom Brokaw at NBC News in New York. Investigators have not determined who was responsible for the anthrax attacks, which killed four people across the country and sickened 17.

ations Monday in Las Vegas. Jurors have been discussing the case since March 4, when closing arguments concluded.

Muslim prayer dispute: Thirty Muslims walked off the job at a Dell Inc. plant in Nashville, Tenn., after alleging the company refused to let them pray at sunset — the latest dispute over prayer between an American business and its Islamic employees.

The Muslim workers, who were packing Dell computers through a temporary labor agency, are taking the dispute to mediation, both sides said Friday.

Death of casino heir: A former stripper and her lover were each sentenced Friday to one to five years in prison for stealing a fortune in silver after the mysterious death of a wealthy Nevada casino heir.

Sandy Murphy, 32, and Rick Tabish, 39, were acquitted in November of murdering Ted Binion, son of legendary casino owner Benny Binion. However, the two were found guilty of conspiracy, burglary and grand larceny relating to the theft of \$7 million in silver that Binion had buried in the southern Nevada desert.

War on terrorism

Shooting deaths of Iraqis: A Marine accused of premeditated murder in the shooting deaths of two suspected Iraqi insurgents will have an Article 32 hearing April 25 at Camp Lejeune, his lawyer said.

2nd Lt. Barrio Pantano, 33, allegedly shot the unarmed men in the back last April 15 as they tried to drive away from a house in Mahmudiyah, Iraq, that the Marines had been ordered to search.

Sept. 11 detainee tapes: More than 140 previously undisclosed videotapes of Sept. 11 detainees at the Metropolitan Detention Cen-

ter in Brooklyn recently were discovered and turned over to authorities probing physical and verbal abuses at the jail, a federal report and attorneys for the detainees said Friday.

Justice Department officials are still reviewing the 143 tapes, which include instances in which detention center staff recorded video and audio of detainees meeting with their attorneys, a violation of the law, the report and the attorneys said.

Business

Enron case: Government regulators handed a major victory to western utilities and cities trying to get out of exorbitant contracts they made with disgraced energy giant Enron Corp. during the power crisis of 2000-01.

In a six-page order issued Friday evening, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission determined that Enron was engaging in illegal activity at the time it entered in the contracts. It was the first time the commission acknowledged that the contracts were signed under fraudulent pretenses.

The regulatory agency said a hearing should be held to determine whether Enron can collect profits it would have received had those contracts been fulfilled.

World

Syrian troops in Lebanon: President Bashar Assad reiterated his commitment to withdrawing all Syrian troops and intelligence agents from Lebanon, a U.N. envoy said Saturday, adding he would present a timetable for the pullout at the United Nations next week.

U.N. envoy Terje Roed-Larsen did not give any details after meeting with Assad in the northern city of Aleppo but indicated he had received a timetable for the pullout.

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Older troops, fewer medical concerns

Increasing age of warfighters leads to increase in noncombat ailments

By RUSS RIZZO

Stars and Stripes

In many ways, Maj. William Wolfe is a typical Army reservist.

The 47-year-old high school history teacher from outside Hershey, Pa., has served 21 years in a variety of roles as an active-duty and Reserve soldier.

Before deploying with his transportation brigade in January, Wolfe had no major medical problems and worked full-time behind a desk.

But once he arrived at Camp Spearhead in Kuwait, Wolfe soon found his body was not ready for the rigors of deployment: the long shifts lifting cargo and climbing stairs; the stress of a daily commute on roads insurgents were known to attack; the lack of sleep from living with others in a tent.

Within a month, Wolfe's body sent him a warning. A nagging pinch developed near his heart, and he found himself dizzy and out of breath — signs of possible heart trouble he feared could lead to an attack if ignored.

"You can't work 14- to 16-hour shifts when you're 47 years old when you haven't been in that kind of environment and expect to be fine," Wolfe said recently from a bed at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

To doctors at Landstuhl, Wolfe represents a new reality for the U.S. military. As reservists and National Guardsmen are called to duty in unprecedented numbers, they are bringing new medical challenges with them.

Part-time soldiers now make up about 40 percent of the 150,000 troops in Iraq, a Pentagon spokesman said. Overall, more than 184,000 reservists in all services are deployed worldwide, according to the Army National Guard Web site.

And because these troops tend to be older, military doctors find themselves dealing with illnesses and injuries common in older patients.

The average age of reservists in all services is 33, according to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. A quarter of all reservists are over age 40.

At Landstuhl, where most soldiers injured downrange go for medical treatment, more troops arrive with noncombat injuries than fighting wounds. Eight out of 10 soldiers airlifted from battle zones since the beginning of the war in Iraq were treated for noncombat injuries, according to the reserve affairs office.

They suffer from diseases such as heart problems, joint pain or noncombat injuries such as fractures suffered during training.

Atop the list of ailments is chest pain, followed by back pain and hernias.

For Dr. (Col.) Randolph Modlin, chief of cardiology at Landstuhl, the figures are easy to explain.

"We've never gone to war with guys as old as this before," he said.

In 2004 alone, Landstuhl physicians treated 559 soldiers who suffered from heart disease or experienced chest pain downrange, according to hospital statistics.

That's an average of almost 11 heart patients a week.

By comparison, the hospital treated an average of 24 patients a week for all types of war wounds combined last year, according to hospital statistics.

While most heart patients are over age 40, like Wolfe, Modlin said doctors have seen clogged arteries in reservists in their 30s.

"It's just amazing how much coronary disease we've seen," said Dr. (Maj.) Michael Huber, a cardiologist at Landstuhl.

Just last month, doctors found a 95 percent blockage in an artery of 37-year-old Sgt. 1st Class Kris Barrett, a National Guardsman from Michigan. They later discovered Barrett came to war with another artery partially clogged that he knew nothing about.

While guarding Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Barrett felt a pain in his chest and found himself out of breath while walking.

His first reaction: "I thought I needed to work out more," Barrett said from a bed at Landstuhl before flying to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., for heart surgery.

Like Barrett, some patients go to war with heart trouble they do not discover until they push their bodies carrying heavy flak jackets in the desert heat.

For others, heart disease develops in combat because of habits common to the battlefield, including stress, poor diet and smoking, doctors said.

"An average 40-year-old there puts on 40 pounds of gear in that heat and lets people shoot at him — that's a recipe for heart failure," Modlin said.

Back pain is the second most common noncombat injury Landstuhl doctors see. Like heart patients, back patients tend to be older, because bones and joints naturally deteriorate over time, doctors said.

"That low-back twinge a reservist felt at home suddenly becomes a war-stopper," said Michael Kilpatrick, deputy director of deployment health support in the reserve affairs office.

Hernia is the third most common noncombat injury seen at Landstuhl. Most of these patients are reservists and National Guardsmen because of their older ages, said Dr. (Col.) Tyler Putnam, a general surgeon who treats hernias.

The Army and military doctors are doing a variety of things to address illnesses in older troops, such as adding new surgical specialties and beefing up physical training for reservists. The Army plans to add a program to better monitor the health of its reservists, Kilpatrick said. That may include requiring certain older reservists to take an electrocardiogram, or EKG, every year.

An EKG test likely would have shown Barrett's early heart trouble, preventing him from going to Baghdad in the first place.

But Wolfe's diagnosis was different. After days of evaluations at Landstuhl, doctors released the reservist to Kuwait. His heart showed no problems.

"I guess it was just the stress," Wolfe said.

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RUSS RIZZO/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. 1st Class Kris Barrett, 37, of the 119th Field Artillery Battalion of the Michigan National Guard, was flown from Baghdad to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany recently after experiencing chest pains while guarding Abu Ghraib prison. Doctors discovered one of Barrett's arteries was 95 percent blocked and sent him to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., for surgery.

Where does it hurt?

Eighty percent of the 22,000 soldiers taken out of combat for injuries since the beginning of the war on terror in 2001 suffered injuries or disease not related to combat. Here is a breakdown of the top injuries seen in 2004.

Injury	All armed forces	Army
Chest pain/heart disease (N)	559	410
Wound, unspecified fragment (C)	419	213
Wound, bullets (C)	374	191
Wound, bombs (C)	269	152
Backache/back pain (N)	241	209
Hernia (N)	206	183
Wound, other explosion (C)	198	110
Fracture (N)	139	85
Knee tear (N)	128	108

C-indicates combat injury
N-indicates non-combat injury

Source: Joint Patient Tracking Application

PETER PHOTIKOS/Stars and Stripes

Unhealthy trend causes doctors, policies to adapt

By RUSS RIZZO

Stars and Stripes

With more soldiers leaving combat because of medical problems associated with advancing age, doctors and Army planners are adjusting to offer better treatment to prevent unit soldiers from seeing combat.

Doctors at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, for example, are adapting to handle more heart and hernia patients, two of the top three non-combat injuries they treat.

Later this year, a doctor specializing in angioplasty will join Landstuhl's staff so the hospital can perform the procedure regularly rather than sending patients to

Walter Reed Army Medical Center or local German hospitals.

And, Dr. (Col.) Randolph Modlin, chief of cardiology at Landstuhl, said he has pushed the Army to bring more treadmill tests to Iraq so field doctors can better evaluate chest pain using stress tests. He said half of all patients who arrive at Landstuhl with chest pain are returned to combat because they have no medical problems.

Landstuhl doctors last year also helped change Army policy to allow hernia patients to return downrange on light duty. Now 90 percent of soldiers treated at Landstuhl head back to war after surgery, up from just 30 percent before the change, said general surgeon Dr. (Col.) Tyler Put-

nam.

The Army also is looking at changes to prevent unit soldiers from going to war in the first place.

The service is considering tougher physical fitness standards for all ages, said Michael Kilpatrick, deputy director of deployment health support in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. And, it is planning to change the way it monitors reservists' health.

During monthly call-ups, soldiers may be required to report any recent health problems, Kilpatrick said. If a troop pulled his back during a racquetball game, for example, he may be dropped from the reserves until he is fit enough to

go to war, he said.

"There is nothing more frustrating for a commander than to have someone in theater for a couple of months and then leave because of a problem that they knew about before but suppressed," he said.

An electrocardiogram test may be added to yearly physicals of older soldiers to catch heart problem before deployment, Kilpatrick said.

Some of the measures are aimed at ending a mentality that has been common among part-time soldiers, he said.

"This attitude of 'We're never going to be called up, or we're five years away and will be retired by then ...'" Kilpatrick said, "kind of got us where we are today."

Air Force tweaking Fit to Fight program

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

One year after launching a more rigid physical fitness program, Air Force officials have tweaked the Fit to Fight program, and will stop penalizing wide-waisted airmen who otherwise meet healthy weight standards.

"[The changes] won't affect very many people, in truth, are minimal changes," said Lt. Col. Sherry Sasser, chief of health promotions for the Air Force surgeon general. "But I think it will improve our ability to intervene much sooner and may give those few who fall outside of the set parameters a way to earn [full points] if

they have a healthy weight. It's not a lowering of standards."

Airmen who otherwise would have had points deducted for not meeting the waist circumference test now will get full points if their Body Mass Index falls within the healthy range, she said.

The BMI is calculated by one's weight in kilos, divided by height in meters squared, or by weight in pounds divided by height in inches squared and multiplied by 703. A BMI of 19 to 25 indicates a normal or healthy weight, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Fit to Fight replaced the Air Force's cycle ergometry test, and measures airmen's fitness by using a 1.5-mile run, waist

circumference or BMI, and number of pushups and sit-ups they can do. Airmen will continue to get up to 50 points for the run, 30 points for waist measurement or BMI metric, and 10 points each for sit-ups and pushups.

Anyone earning a poor fit score of 70 or lower will have to enter a five-day-a-week exercise program.

Officials also changed the time airmen have to be retested if they fall in the low fit category — they will be retested within 90 days instead of the current 180 days. The change lets health officials assess sooner the effectiveness of weight loss or exercise programs and make necessary changes, Sasser said.

The length of time allowed to complete the 1.5 mile-run will be increased for tests done at high elevations.

The changes came out of the physical fitness program's first annual review and will go into effect either in late spring or early summer, Sasser said.

Air Force leaders rejected health officials' recommendations to change the scoring system to 60-20-10-10, which places a greater emphasis on the cardiovascular benefits of the run, Sasser said.

The change was rejected because they did not want to make too many changes too soon, she said. Officials will continue to monitor the program and might adjust the scoring system during next year's review.

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Bood runs thicker between siblings during war

Brothers and sisters of deployed servicemembers organize to support both troops and each other

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

Two hundred forty one died that day.

Among them, a feisty 20-year-old Marine who, given the chance to live and marry, "would have had a slew of children. I'm convinced of it," said his sister, Deborah Knipple Peterson.

Peterson, who was 28 when Cpl. Jim and Katpale was killed in the bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, grieved along with fathers, mothers, spouses and children.

But at the time, there were no "siblings only" groups who might have helped her grieve and deal with a perspective only siblings could know, she said.

Might have things been different? She wonders.

Today, with America's young troops at war, countless of those left behind at home have started groups and programs and efforts to make life better — be it for themselves or for the troops in the combat zones.

Peterson, who teamed with a former Marine to give grieving siblings a peer group of their own, is among them.

Here are a few of the stories.

A league of their own

Modeling a program after the American Gold Star Mothers, especially popular during the World War II era, Marine veteran Bill Kibler launched the Web site www.GoldStarSiblings.com to give brothers and sisters of ser-

vicemembers killed in combat a venue in which to connect with each other.

"Mothers have other children and there's nothing really for those children," said Kibler, 41, who served in Beirut in 1982-83 but was not there during the bombing. "Even fathers are feeling left out."

He has had a number of hits on the Web site, but no one yet willing to "take the plunge" to post their thoughts, their feelings, their words.

"I'm getting 30 and 40 hits a week since it started two months ago, but not getting a lot of input," Kibler said. "But I'm not discouraged."

He turned to Peterson to be one of the first to post a tribute to her brother.

Peterson said she's happy to oblige.

"Twenty years later, I don't want people to forget he was a human, with dreams and aspirations that were taken away from him," Jim, she said. "I don't want people to forget he was a human, with dreams and aspirations that were taken away from him. He's a hero."

It's all in the wrist

Whether he's a patriot first or an entrepreneur first matters not to Steve Cloward.

He just wants folks to buy his plastic wristbands, similar to the yellow ones made popular by cyclist Lance Armstrong in support of cancer research.

The bands publicly show support for troops fighting in the Middle East, he said, and financially support their families back home.

In October, Cloward began selling the plastic red, white, blue,



KATE UNDERWOOD/Courtesy to Stars and Stripes

Pfc. Kara Underwood gives her sister Kate a hug. Kate, who promised to keep her big sister supplied in toiletries and goodies while in Iraq, went a step further and created a program in her hometown of Birdsboro, Pa., that raises money and ships donated items to her sister's fellow troops in Mosul.

camouflage and red-white-blue marled wristbands to which they would shell out \$1, with proceeds going to the Armed Forces Relief Trust, an organization run by volunteers who are former military and designed to help troops and families in time of need and emergencies.

To date, his organization, Bands for Freedom, has donated \$100,000 to AFRT.

"I picked AFRT because I felt it was the best way to help servicemen and women and their families, and the main reason was because 100 cents on the dollar we give them passes on to the troops, with nothing pulled out" to cover expenses such as administrative costs, he said.

A majority of the colored bands sell through the Web site, www.bandsforfreedom.com.

A star(s) is born

When Kate Underwood's sister, who happens to double as her best friend, was shipped off to Iraq in August, the 18-year-old high school student promised to periodically send Pfc. Kara Underwood goodies and toiletries.

She figured fellow soldiers would need the same care and attention.

So in September, Kate and four friends started raising money and collecting goods to ship to Mosul, Iraq, where Kara Underwood is serving.

The program grew, and today about 300 students and some 50 teachers from Daniel Boone Middle and High schools in Birdsboro, Pa., contribute to Kate's program she calls STARS, Stand Together and Raise Support.

Collection boxes scattered

throughout the small town, about 10 as we have troops over there," are filled weekly with items troops need and want while serving in Iraq.

Her Web site, http://www.boone.k12.pa.us/HS_Student_Works/index.htm, contains a wish list of items.

"She's my best friend, and [the separation] has been really hard for me," Kate said. "She's my sister, so she has to be proud of me, no matter what I do. But I think with STARS, it really just makes her proud."

The program will continue "as long as we have troops over there," said the graduating senior.

Her departure from the school this summer won't mean an end to the program. She has already picked successors.

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GIs see stable Iraq police force as 'ticket out'

127th MP Company has spent \$3 million on security forces

BY VINCE LITTLE

Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq — The 127th Military Police Company has spent more than \$3 million on infrastructure and force-protection improvements during the past 10 months at the 19 Iraqi police stations it monitors in northwest Baghdad, said Army Capt. Kevin Hanrahan, the unit's commander.

An effective, stable Iraqi security force is key to a withdrawal of U.S. forces, he added.

"This country has to be secured by Iraqis. Iraq will never be truly secure unless it has a strong Iraqi police force, Iraqi army and Iraqi National Guard," said Hanrahan, 30, of Whitman, Mass. "That's our ticket out."

The 127th Military Police Company, which works for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division, will return to Hanau, Germany, next month after a year of day-and-night patrols in a highly volatile sector of Baghdad that lies north of the infamous Airport Road and east of the Euphrates River.

During the year, the MPs made steady progress developing and training the Iraqi police, Hanrahan said. He credited the progress to upgrades in facilities and equipment delivered by the U.S. Army.



TRISTAN VASQUEZ/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

A member of the 127th Military Police Company leads Iraqi police officers in a training session last month at the Al-Shoula station in northwest Baghdad.

Fortifying those 19 stations was a top priority. The buildings had to be capable of withstanding terrorist attacks so the Iraqi police could conduct business.

"The streets of Baghdad have no equal in the U.S., so they can't do normal police operations," Hanrahan said. "We have to enhance their capabilities so they can fight this insurgency — and become an effective security apparatus for the Iraqi people."

The stations once had a single wall of Constantine wire — also known as razor

wire. Most now feature 9-foot-high concrete walls, sturdy enough to withstand heavy-caliber machine-gun fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

Flat rooftops were given 3-foot walls with fighting positions at every corner and overhead cover. That allows Iraqi police to move around and properly defend the facilities, he said.

Gates have been installed at each location, manned by guards toting AK-47s around the clock. The entrances are lined

with zigzagging roads that weave through barriers, designed to prevent direct penetration by insurgents.

Iraqi police officers also received additional body armor.

Hanrahan said the 127th MPs aimed the improvements at the most vulnerable stations first and proceeded from there.

"We also built them so they're user-friendly to make the public feel safe to come in and file complaints," he said. "We think it's really worked."

"I wanted to harden my sites up as best as possible to make it very costly for insurgents to attack our stations."

That was put to the test in August, when about 85 terrorists attacked the Al-Shoula Police Station with RPGs and heavy-caliber machine guns. Not only did the Iraqi police stay and fight alongside the 127th MPs, he said, they kept the insurgents from breaching the gate.

Three months later at the Al-Hurriya Police Station, where updated force-protection work was still being completed, the Iraqis repelled an assault by 15 terrorists, without assistance from military police.

"Confidence in yourself and the equipment you have is pretty important," Hanrahan said. "It was significant in my mind to see them do that."

The Iraqi police within the 127th Military Police Company's sector routinely carry out dismounted patrols, vehicle and personal searches, checkpoints, community policing and the hunt for suspected terrorists.

Hanrahan said it's proof of the efforts of his soldiers are paying dividends.

"That's definitely a key to us going home, and it motivates my soldiers every day," he said. "We've made a difference."

E-mail Vince Little at: littlev@stripes.com

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Vilseck	25-31 Mar
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Wiesbaden	1-7 Apr
Wuerzburg	25-31 Mar



Showtimes are subject to change. Please check your local theater or aafes.com to verify show dates.



Seniors help families with adoption of foreign children

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

After three biological children, Maj. Paul and Monica Bovankovich still had room in their hearts and home for one more. So they adopted Abigail, now 2, through an agency in China.

After three failed pregnancies, Tech Sgt. Caroline Paton and her husband, Master Sgt. Robert Paton, decided to try adoption. They are expecting a child from Ukraine to join their family, perhaps as soon as this summer.

Seminars on how to adopt children from foreign countries will be held at three bases in England this month to answer questions for people who, for whatever reason, are considering an adoption.

"People are so scared of the unknown," said Monica Bovankovich, who will share her story at the seminars. "They know they want to adopt, but they don't know what it involves."

A panel of social workers, immigration officials and adoption agency representatives are scheduled to take part in the seminars. They are scheduled for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 22 at the RAF Lakenheath chapel, 5-9 p.m. March 22 at the RAF Mildenhall chapel, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 23 at the RAF Alconbury Family Support Center.

Bovankovich said she and her husband, who works at the Joint



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Air Force

Monica Bovankovich holds Abigail, her adopted daughter. Bovankovich will tell the story of Abigail's adoption to prospective parents at seminars this month in England.

Analysis Center at RAF Molesworth, began the adoption process in January 2003, receiving Abigail from an orphanage in China about 15 months later.

The waiting period, she said in a telephone interview, is not much different from a pregnancy.

"It's an amazing thing. You want to protect them," she said of the adoptee-to-be. "It's like [one of her biological children] was taken to another country and you

couldn't do anything. It wasn't a helpless feeling."

The couple made a DVD of the entire process, she said, and "we pass them out like candy. We want to encourage people to do it. It's such a miracle."

For Paton, attempts to have children have ended in sadness three times.

Her husband, who works in the safety office at RAF Lakenheath, was a moving force in their decision to adopt, she said.

"He saw me with children. I have nieces and nephews," she said in a phone interview. "He said, 'We should be parents.'"

The safety officer at RAF Alconbury said she attended a seminar at the base last fall, at which Bovankovich spoke.

"The seminar allowed us to know our choices," Paton said.

The Patons will receive a child between the ages of 14 months and 2 years, she said. Ukraine does not allow children under the age of 14 months to be adopted in case the parents change their minds.

"We know it will be life-changing," she said. "We're just so excited."

Bovankovich can attest to the feeling the Patons will experience when they first hold their child in their arms.

"It's just like when you give birth," she said. "You think that child. That child was given to you."

E-mail Ron Jensen at: jensen@mil.estrpides.osd.mil

IMA-Europe employees recognized

Employees and communities under the Installation Management Agency-Europe were recognized for outstanding work in two Department of the Army engineering competitions.

Two employees of the 100th Area Support Group, based in Vilseck, Germany, were honored in the annual William C. Gribble Jr. Directorate of Public Works Executive of the Year awards program.

Patrick Bennett was named the Gribble executive of the year for his work on Efficient Basing Grafenwörth and privatization of utilities.

And Gerhard Hoessel was named the DPW business management executive of the year for updating an obsolete locking system in many community buildings.

The 6th Area Support Group, based in Stuttgart, Germany, won in the installation category and 415th Base Support Battalion in Kaiserslautern, Germany, won in the small group category.

The 415th BSB's win highlighted the work of Bob Ackley, chief of utilities; Dieter Haertel, mechanical engineer; and Paul Lindemer, chief of the Facilities Engineering Division. They will be recognized during the engineer component of the IMA-AUSA Training Conference at the end of March in Kansas City, Mo.

NATO ships enter Red Sea

Six ships in NATO's Response Force Mine Countermeasures Group 2 crossed through the Suez Canal on Saturday, the first time these ships have traveled to the Red Sea as part of the alliance's standing force.

According to a NATO press release, the cruise is part of the alliance's Mediterranean Dialogue. The program is designed to develop cooperation and communication between the crews aboard the ships and officials in the visited ports.

The group is made up of six ships from the five nations that normally contribute to the mine countermeasures group: Spain, Germany, Greece, Turkey and Italy.

Gulf War ex-POW to speak at Mildenhall

RAF MILDENHALL, England—The commander of the Landstuhl Army Regional Medical Center in Germany, a prisoner of war during the Persian Gulf War of 1991, will speak at RAF Mildenhall as part of Women's History Month events.

Army Col. Rhonda Cornum is the featured speaker for a luncheon from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday at the Galaxy Club.

Cornum was a flight surgeon for a helicopter battalion during Operation Desert Storm. During a mission in find a downed F-16 pilot on Feb. 27, the Black Hawk helicopter in which she was riding was shot down. Five of the eight people aboard were killed. She was wounded and taken prisoner along with two other survivors.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$7 for club members and \$9 for non-members.

From staff reports

USAREUR GIs honored as outstanding leaders

Stars and Stripes

Two captains and a chief warrant officer have been selected to represent U.S. Army Europe in the Department of Army-wide 2004 Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award competition.

The three are Capt. Joseph M. Ewers, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment in Baumholder, Germany; Capt. John C. Moore, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment in Baumholder, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ryan N. Collier, Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment in Katterbach, Germany.

The three had the highest rankings out of 15 winners at the USAREUR level. Seven of the 15 USAREUR winners are assigned to V Corps units.

For 15 years, the Department of the Army had given the award to officers who best demonstrate the MacArthur stood for duty, honor and country. The award promotes and sustains effective junior officer leadership, according to Army documents.

About 3,200 officers are eligible for the award. Winners were nominated by their commands. Officials at major commands judged

the packets, assigning each officer a ranking based on their assessment.

USAREUR's top company-grade officers, in addition to Ewers and Moore, follow. All are based in Germany unless otherwise noted.

■ Capt. Jeffrey Beaman, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 27th Transportation Battalion, 21st Theater Support Command, Kaiserslautern.

■ Capt. Scott M. Walter, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation, 12th Aviation Brigade, Giesendorf.

■ Capt. William C. Hannan Jr., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 188th Engineer Brigade, Giesendorf.

■ Capt. Debra J. Holbrook, Company A, Task Force 1st Battalion, 12th Airborne Brigade, Schweinfurt.

■ Capt. John Kilbridge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 50th Infantry, 12th Airborne Brigade, Aviano, Italy.

■ Capt. William Linn, Patrol Division, International Special Training Center, U.S. Army Element, 7th Army Training Command, Grafenwörth.

■ Capt. Anthony T. Murtha, Company B, 1st Battalion, 37th Armored, Baumholder.

■ Capt. Julie Parrillo, Detachment A, 20th Finance Battalion, 26th Finance Command, Heidelberg.

■ Capt. Michelle M. Williams, Detachment A, 20th Finance Battalion, 26th Finance Command, Heidelberg.

■ Capt. Eric Brinker, 191st Ordnance Battalion, 26th Support Group, 21st Theater Support Command, Kaiserslautern.

The Army-wide competition will be in May.



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Ukraine begins pulling troops from Iraq

3 Iraqi police killed; Kurds, Shiites agree on government

BY SAMEER N. YACOB
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Gunmen shot to death three policemen and wounded another Saturday at a funeral procession in the northern city of Mosul, police said, while Ukraine withdrew 150 servicemen from Iraq, starting a gradual pullout that officials have said will be completed by October.

The attack occurred as police were taking part in a procession for a colleague's wife and two children who died in a roadside bomb attack in Mosul a day earlier, said policeman Ammar Hussein.

Insurgents led by Sunni Arabs, a minority that was dominant under Saddam Hussein, are targeting Shiite funeral processions and ceremonies in an apparent campaign to spark a sectarian war. Last month, suicide bombers attacked Shiite mosques during the commemoration of Ashura, killing nearly 100 people.

The Ukrainian company that was based near Suwayrah, 25 miles south of Baghdad, left Iraq and was expected to return home by Tuesday, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry said.

Earlier this month, President Viktor Yushchenko and top de-



A private security guard keeps watch Saturday during a demonstration in Mosul, Iraq, denouncing Thursday's suicide bomb attack on a funeral at a Shiite mosque. The attack killed 50 and wounded over 100.

fense officials ordered a phased withdrawal of Ukraine's 1,650-strong contingent from the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.

Ukraine has lost 17 soldiers in Iraq, and the deployment is deeply unpopular among people in the former Soviet republic.

Ukraine plans to pull about 590 more of its soldiers out of Iraq by May and the rest by October, the Defense Ministry said.

Yushchenko said March 1 that the pullout would be completed by Oct. 15, but Defense Minister Anatoly Gritsenko later said Ukraine might leave some troops in Iraq two months beyond that

deadline.

The U.S. military also announced that a U.S. soldier was killed Friday during operations west of the Iraqi capital in a non-hostile accident in Anbar province, a hotbed of insurgent activity. The military said it was investigating the death but gave no other details.

Iraq's main Shiite and Kurdish coalitions, meanwhile, have agreed on a deal divvying up the top three posts in the new government, but differences remained over the deployment of Arab troops in ethnic Kurdish areas.

A senior member of the Shi-

ite United Iraqi Alliance, Ahmad Chalabi, traveled late Friday to Sulaimaniyah, 160 miles northeast of Baghdad, for talks with the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Jalal Talabani, who is

slated to be Iraq's next president under the agreement.

"There is discussion and there is an agreement on the basic principles. But there is not final agreement on all the details."

This visit was on invitation by Talabani to Chalabi. The atmosphere was positive," said alliance member Ali al-Faisal.

The deal would give the Kurds one major Cabinet post — one fewer than they demanded — but they agreed to support the alliance's candidate for prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari.

On the issue of territory, officials in both political camps said the deal provides for the eventual return of 100,000 Kurdish refugees to the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, southwest of Mosul.

Although the Kurds agreed to disband their 100,000-man peshmerga militia and incorporate it into Iraq's army and security forces, they have opposed Arab troops being deployed in the north and that has become one of the few remaining points to be worked out.



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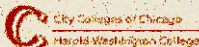


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Rumsfeld vaunts benefits of U.S. military prowess

Show of force in Mideast deters others from future 'mischiefs,' DOD chief says

By ANN SCOTT TYSON
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld upheld the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan Thursday as powerful demonstrations of U.S. military prowess that will make other countries think twice about making "mischiefs" around the world.

Pressed by lawmakers on whether war and tear on U.S. troops and equipment had impaired the Pentagon's ability to meet unforeseen global contingencies, Rumsfeld said U.S. commanders have assured him that "our military is capable of performing."

Rumsfeld acknowledged concern about stress on the force — particularly the Army Reserve and National Guard. He said U.S.

military equipment such as tanks, helicopters and Bradley Fighting Vehicles are wearing out at from double to six times the peacetime rate, leading the Pentagon to request \$12 billion for equipment repairs in the fiscal 2005 emergency supplemental budget.

He also pointed to positive outcomes from the sustained combat. The fighting has created a force of "battle-hardened veterans" whose overthrow of the Taliban government in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq erased doubts in the minds of the nation's friends and foes over U.S. willingness to use force and stay the course of conflicts, Rumsfeld said.

"The world has seen, in the last 3½ years, the capability of the United States of America to go into Afghanistan ... and with

20,000, 15,000 troops working with the Afghans do what 200,000 Soviets couldn't do in a decade. They've seen the United States and the coalition forces go into Iraq. ... That has had a deterrent effect on people," he testified before the House Armed Services Committee.

"If you put your in the shoes of a country that might decide they'd like to make mischief, they have a very recent, vivid example of the fact that the United States has the ability to deal with this," he said Rumsfeld was asked about a potential military threat from China, and said this year's Quadrennial Defense Review — a major rethinking of U.S. military strategy — would plan long-range weapons systems "with respect to China and other circumstances that can change dramatically."



Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld testifies before the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, March 11, 2005, at least 1,513 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,153 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is five higher than the Defense Department's tally.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, eight; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,375 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,044 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ One soldier was killed in a non-hostile accident Friday in Anbar province.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Spc. Matthew A. Koch, 23, West Henrietta, N.Y., killed Wednesday when an explosive detonated near his vehicle in Taji, Iraq, assigned to the 70th Engineer Battalion, Fort Riley, Kan.

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Bulgaria debates Iraq mission

SOFIA, Bulgaria — A senior government official said Friday that Bulgarian troops should remain in Iraq until the end of their mandate, despite widespread popular opposition.

"A pullout of the Bulgarian troops from Iraq ahead of the general elections here this summer

would be a wrong move," Deputy Foreign Minister Gergana Grancharova said in a television interview.

The liberal government of Prime Minister Simeon Saxoburgotski is to decide by the end of the month whether to keep troops in Iraq beyond July. Parliament will then take the final decision.

Bulgaria has a 460-member infantry battalion serving under Polish command in the southern Iraqi city of Diwaniya.

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Iraqi army arrests 30 insurgents in raid

U.S. troops stand by on outskirts of village to provide long-distance firepower

By CHARLIE COON
Stars and Stripes

HIB HIB, Iraq — The Iraqi army rounded up 30 people Thursday night and early Friday morning, including the suspected leader of a bomb-planting insurgency cell and a man suspected of murdering a mayor and plotting the assassination of his successor.

The Iraqi soldiers raided the village of Hib Hib, about six miles west of Baquba, by themselves with only a small contingent of U.S. troops standing by on the outskirts of the village.

It was the first battalion-sized operation conducted by the U.S.-trained Iraqis in Diyala province in north-central Iraq. They previously had conducted smaller missions.

The operation, which took two weeks to plan, was supposed to include a larger group of U.S. soldiers who would have surrounded the suspects' hideouts as Iraqis conducted the raids.

But after the larger U.S. contingent was called off the mission because of muddy, rain-soaked conditions that hampered visibility and travel, the Iraqis — members of the 204th Iraqi Army Battalion and their commander, Col. Abdullah Hassoni Abdullah — insisted on going forward by themselves.

"In [Abdullah's] mind, it was, 'No, I've got to go tonight,'" said Lt. Col. Rob Roggeman, commander of 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, which planned the raid with the Iraqis. "I was restricted to [using] two platoons."

The only U.S. soldiers taking part were two maneuver platoons that guarded the two routes leading out of town, and a sniper team placed atop the Hib Hib police station to keep an eye on the village and provide long-distance firepower if necessary.

Among those arrested at sites throughout the village was Manaf Saleh al-Chiali, nicknamed the "Zarqawi of Hib Hib" after the notorious fugitive. Manaf Saleh is suspected of organizing car bombings and roadside bombs.

Also arrested was Sheikh Ghazi, suspected of arranging the September murder of Hib Hib's former mayor and putting a bounty on the village's current one.

At 11:20 p.m. Thursday, Iraqi troops in white pickup trucks rolled into the village. About 10 minutes later, a flurry of 50 to 100 gunshots rang out on the south side of the darkened town. Around midnight, three U.S. Humvees were seen from atop the police station rolling with lights out to their positions.

The village was quiet for the next two hours as, during a steady rainfall, the Iraqi soldiers surrounded the suspects' hideouts and homes while others knocked on the suspects' doors and placed them under arrest.

In some cases, neighbors helped point out where suspects were staying, according to a brief-



CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Col. Rob Roggeman, center, commander of 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, and Col. Abdullah Hassoni Abdullah, center right, commander of the 204th Iraqi Army Battalion, go over plans at Forward Operating Base Scunior in Baquba, Iraq, for a raid on Thursday night.

ing conducted after the operation by Iraqi and U.S. commanders.

After 2½ hours, all the suspects had been rounded up. Blindfolded and with hands tied, they were loaded onto the backs of flatbed trucks for the cold, rainy ride to a

holding cell at Forward Operating Base Scunior in Baquba, home of the 2-69, which is part of the 42nd Infantry Division's Task Force Liberty.

One insurgent was wounded when he was grazed in the head

by a bullet, and an Iraqi soldier received a superficial head wound, military officials said.

"There was very little fight [by the insurgents]," said Maj. Will Johnson, operations officer for the 2-69.

Abdullah said his soldiers tried to refrain from kicking down doors. It was more of a "cor-don-and-knock" operation.

"We try to avoid random raids but instead do organized raids," he said. "We don't want to create problems between the Iraqi army and the people. We want to have a good relationship with them."

Roggeman praised the Iraqi troops.

"He [Abdullah] is very aggressive," Roggeman said. "He wants to get it on, which is good for us."

Military personnel later tried to verify the identities of the prisoners and interrogate them. Some could be set free, Roggeman said. Most, he added, were likely guilty based on corroborated information obtained by the two armies.

The battalion could hold the suspects at FOB Scunior for up to 48 hours, Roggeman said. Those not released would be moved to another detainment facility at the battalion's parent unit, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, across the street at FOB Warhorse.

Detainees not released would probably be prosecuted by the fledgling Iraqi legal system, Roggeman said. He added that the U.S. military could hold the suspects indefinitely if necessary to ensure they don't slip through cracks in the Iraqi system.

"It's still martial law," Roggeman said. "The military can do what it wants."

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Congress grills DOD on lack of tourniquets

Stars and Stripes

Congressional officials have asked the Army to investigate why all soldiers are not carrying modern tourniquets into battle, a request that comes two months after military leaders ordered distribution of the medical devices.

During hearings this week before the defense subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, members asked for a review of the issue and a timetable for when soldiers might start carrying the items.

Also this week, The (Baltimore) Sun reported that two Democrats — Illinois Sen. Richard J. Durbin and Michigan Sen. Carl Levin — wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asking him to conduct a “high-level” review of the issue.

“We are deeply concerned by reports that the Pentagon has failed to identify and fulfill urgent requests for equipment essential to saving lives of our troops in the field,” the letter said. “This type of delay is disturbing during times of peace, but in the midst of the armed conflicts in Iraq and Af-

ghanistan, it is nothing short of appalling.”

On Jan. 6, the U.S. Central Command issued a directive requiring soldiers serving in Iraq to carry the tourniquets.

The Sun published an investigation on March 5 detailing how distribution of the tourniquets have been delayed because training manuals are still being written and carrying cases for the devices are still being designed.

At the Senate hearing, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker said no soldiers are entering combat without all the supplies needed. Troops are trained to improvise tourniquets out of items on hand, he said, but added, “I see no reason why there would be any shortage.”

The Sun report included interviews with more than a dozen military doctors and medical specialists who said some soldiers in Iraq could have been saved if a tourniquet was available at the time of injury. For example, when Lt. David R. Bernstein was hit, a buddy struggled to fashion a makeshift tourniquet, but it broke. Bernstein died that night.

Ex-commander: Youths were held at Abu Ghraib

BY MATT KELLEY

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A boy no older than 11 was among the children held by the Army at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, the former U.S. commander of the facility told a general investigating abuses at the prison.

Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski did not say what happened to the boy or why he was imprisoned, according to a transcript of her interview with Maj. Gen. George Fay that was released by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The transcript of the May 2004 interview was among hundreds of pages of documents about Iraq prisoner abuses the group made public Thursday after getting them under the Freedom of Information Act.

Karpinski, who was in charge

of Abu Ghraib from July to November 2003, said she often visited the prison's youngest inmates. One boy “looked like he was 8 years old,” Karpinski said.

“He told me he was almost 12,” Karpinski said. “He told me his brother was there with him, but he really wanted to see his mother, could he please call his mother.”

Military officials have acknowledged that some juvenile prisoners had been held at Abu Ghraib, a massive prison built by Saddam Hussein's government outside Baghdad. But the transcript is the first documented evidence of a child no older than 11 being held prisoner.

Military officials have said that no juvenile prisoners were subject to the abuses captured in photographs from Abu Ghraib. But some of the men shown being stripped naked and humiliated had been accused of raping a 14-year-old prisoner.

The new documents offer rare details about the children whom the U.S. military has held in Iraq. Karpinski said the Army began holding women and children in a high-security cellblock at Abu Ghraib in the summer of 2003 be-

cause the facility was better than lockups in Baghdad where the youths had been held.

The documents include statements from six witnesses who said three interrogators and a civilian interpreter at Abu Ghraib got drunk one night and took a 17-year-old female prisoner from her cell. The four men forced the

girl to expose her breasts and kissed her, the reports said. The witnesses — whose names were blacked out of the documents given to the ACLU — said those responsible were not punished.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman has said three soldiers were given “non-judicial” punishment for making a female prisoner expose her breasts. Nonjudicial punishments

in documents about youths held at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq

are sanctions short of a court-martial, such as being fined or reduced in rank.

The ACLU has sued Donald Rumsfeld on behalf of four Iraqis and four Afghans who say they were tortured at U.S. military facilities.

Rumsfeld and his spokesman have repeatedly said that the defense secretary and his aides never authorized abuse.

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Four officers investigated for sexual misconduct at Gitmo

WASHINGTON — Four U.S. officers, including a one-star general, at the detention center for terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are under criminal investigation for alleged sexual misconduct, a senior defense official said Friday. The general's case has been referred to the Army, the official said.

The U.S. Southern Command, which oversees the Guantanamo facility, had announced

March 4 that two lieutenant colonels and one colonel had been suspended pending an investigation of alleged “personal misconduct,” which was not further described.

None of the accused officers have been identified by name and Southern Command did not disclose that the case referred to the Army involved a general officer. The senior defense official spoke on condition of anonymity because the cases are under legal review.

—The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Bush, Dems trade shots over Social Security

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush and Democrats took their differences over Social Security to the airwaves Saturday, with Bush complaining about "scare ads" against his plan and Democrats denouncing his proposal as a "risky privatization scheme."

"Postponing reform will leave our children with drastic and unpleasant choices: huge tax increases that will kill jobs, massive new borrowing or sudden, painful cuts in Social Security benefits or other programs," Bush said in his weekly radio address.

In the Democratic broadcast an hour later, James Roosevelt Jr. — a grandson of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and former Social Security official — accused Bush of breaking a long tradition of bipartisan support for the retirement program.

"In 1935, my grandfather signed the Social Security Act into law, ensuring that Americans retired with financial security," Roosevelt said.

"And since that time, Democrats and Republicans have worked together to protect and strengthen Social Security. Like most Americans, I agree with the guiding principle that America's workers deserve a secure retirement," added Roosevelt, who served as the Social Security Administration's associate commissioner for retirement policy during the Clinton administration.

Bush reiterated his promise of no changes in current benefits to those already retired or who are age 55 or older, "no matter what the scare ads or the politicians might tell you."

Under Bush's plan, younger workers would have the option of diverting part of their Social Security taxes into stock or bond investments — in exchange for a reduction in future guaranteed benefits. The president contends that workers can benefit from higher rates of return from stocks and bonds.

But critics claim such a plan would penalize workers in times of long market downturns, that Social Security won't approach default until mid-century and that Bush's proposal won't fix the system's financial problems anyway.

"They do not prolong the life of the program by a single day," Roosevelt said.



WSB-TV/AP

In a video image, Brian Nichols, the suspect in the shooting of Superior Court Judge Rowland Barnes, his clerk and a Fulton County Deputy, is escorted Saturday by FBI agents into a building.

Suspect in Ga. slayings caught

BY RUSS BYNUM
The Associated Press

DULUTH, Georgia — A man accused of killing three people at an Atlanta courthouse Friday was captured Saturday after taking a woman hostage at an apartment complex and was a suspect in the fatal shooting of an immigration agent found dead hours earlier, officials said.

"Brian Nichols is in custody. He turned himself in without incident. Everybody is safe," said Officer Darren Moloney of the Gwinnett County Police Department. Moloney said Nichols was armed and had a female hostage when he was caught. The woman was not identified by authorities.

Nichols, 33, was taken into federal custody. FBI spokesman Steve Lazarus said Nichols is a suspect in the courthouse shootings and Saturday's fatal shooting of a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent, whose blue pickup truck, pistol and badge were missing.

The courthouse shootings Friday set off a massive manhunt and created widespread chaos across Atlanta, where schools, restaurants and office buildings locked down amid fears that the suspect might strike again.

Nichols was being escorted to his retrial on rape and other charges Friday when he allegedly overpowered court deputy Cynthia Hall, taking her gun, before killing the judge presiding over his case, a court reporter and a deputy who confronted him as he escaped the courthouse. Hall remained in critical condition Saturday.

Nichols then allegedly pistol whipped Atlanta Journal-Constitution reporter Don O'Brian and stole his car. But later that night, the car was found in the parking garage where Nichols allegedly stole it.

O'Brian wrote in Saturday's Atlanta Journal-Constitution that he had just parked his car when a young man pulled a gun and said, "Give me your keys or I'll kill you," then told him to get in the truck.

O'Brian refused and started to run and eventually escaped.

In the rape case, Nichols was accused of bursting into his ex-girlfriend's home, binding her with duct tape and sexually assaulting her over three days. Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard said Nichols brought a loaded machine gun into the home and a cooler with food in case he was hungry.

Nichols had been dating the woman for eight years, and she tried to break up with him after he got another woman pregnant, Hazen said. Though he is accused of imprisoning the woman and raping her, Hazen said his client claims she invited him over and they had consensual sex.

Nichols faced a possible life sentence if convicted in his retrial on charges of rape, sodomy, burglary, and false imprisonment, among others. Prosecutor Gayle Abramson said she believes Nichols was certain he would be convicted and was willing to kill to avoid it.

Rice denies presidential aspirations for 2008

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who has been mentioned as a possible Republican presidential candidate in 2008, denies having any such ambitions now.

During a discussion with editors and reporters at The Washington Times, Rice was asked, "Would you consider running for president in 2008?" "... I have never wanted to run for anything," Rice said in the interview published Saturday. "I don't think I even ran for class anything when I was in school."

In a poll conducted in February, 42 percent of voters said Rice should run for the White House. The survey, conducted by the Siena College Research Institute and sponsored by Hearst Newspapers, found that 81 percent of people would vote for a woman for president, 53 percent thought Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., should try for the job.

"I'm going to try to be a really good secretary of state," Rice told the Times. "I have enormous respect for people who do run for office. It's really hard for me to imagine myself in that role."

From The Associated Press



Rice

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Dispute shuts down House ethics panel

BY SUZANNE GAMBOA
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A dispute between Republicans and Democrats over new rules has virtually shut down the House ethics committee.

The panel's five Democrats this week balked at adopting Republican-crafted operating rules passed earlier by the GOP-controlled House, leaving the committee in limbo.

West Virginia Rep. Alan Mollohan, the committee's senior Democrat, said Friday the panel now can't take action against a member or aide or launch inquiries into their conduct. But that's better than operating by the GOP's new rules, he said.

"If you are going to have an ethics committee, you are going to have to do it right. You are going to have a good ethics committee; otherwise, you shouldn't have one," Mollohan said.

The ethics committee meets occasionally, when an investigation is pending. An informal truce by Democrats and Republicans not to push ethics probes of each other's conduct ended last year with a Democratic complaint against Republican Majority Leader Tom DeLay of Texas. The com-

mittee issued three findings criticizing DeLay.

Democrats said the new rules would prevent renewing pending inquiries involving DeLay and Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Wash. Mollohan said previously rules were written for the committee by bipartisan task forces, not dictated by the House.

Now that the committee has missed the deadline for adopting the rules, the full House must again approve them before the committee can start operating. This time, however, a single House member could block them.

"We understand that our Democratic members are frustrated about the new rules, but we are hopeful we can persuade them that the ethics committee has no choice but to enforce the rules as passed by the full House," said Ed Cassidy, an aide to the ethics panel's new chairman, Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

One of the rules would require dismissal of a complaint if, after 45 days, committee members had not acted to keep the complaint on the agenda. Mollohan said that rule allows committee members "to just sit on their hands and let the clock tick." Cassidy said Hastings hopes that he and Mollohan "can work something out."

Report says money from Indian tribe, gambling company funded DeLay trip

WASHINGTON — House Majority Leader Tom DeLay traveled to Britain with his wife, several aides and lobbyists on a \$70,000 junket mostly paid for with money from an Indian tribe and a gambling services company, The Washington Post reported Saturday.

Not long after the outing, DeLay, the second most powerful Republican in the House of Representatives, played a key role in killing gaming-related legislation opposed by the company and tribe.

DeLay, R-Texas, reported in House financial disclosures that the weekend May 2000 trip was paid for by the National Center for Public Policy Research, a

nonprofit organization. However, the Post reported, lobbyist Jack Abramoff suggested the trip and arranged for two of his clients, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and eLottery Inc., to send checks to the center to cover the travel.

A lawyer for the tribe and an eLottery official said they were unaware the checks were meant to pay for the DeLay trip, which included golf at Scotland's legendary St. Andrews course.

The newspaper's review of documents related to the trip found the dates on the two checks coincided with the day DeLay's party left on their trip. The Choctaw and eLottery each sent a \$25,000 check, the Post found.

Under House rules, lawmakers and their staffs are permitted to have travel expenses paid only for officially connected travel and only by organizations directly connected to the trip. Payments by registered lobbyists are not allowed.

— The Associated Press



DeLay

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Study for bridge barrier ordered

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Golden Gate Bridge officials ordered studies for a suicide barrier Friday, leaving engineers with the difficult task of designing a structure that can stop bridge jumpers without marring the world-famous span.

The board of directors of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District approved a committee's decision last month to develop a design, conduct environmental reviews and seek funding to build the suicide deterrent.

Since the bridge was built in 1937, an estimated 1,300 people have taken the deadly 220-foot plunge from what many consider the world's leading site for suicides. An average of 20 people



Tourists Phil Howard, left, Dorothy Dove, center, and Richard Alvarez take in the view from the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco on Friday. Bridge officials gave final approval Friday to begin studies for a suicide barrier on the bridge.

pitch themselves over the 4½-foot-tall rail each year.

Golden Gate directors expressed concern about how the district would pay for the project. The district plans to look for outside money to pay for the studies, which are expected to cost about \$2 million and take about two

years, said spokeswoman Mary Currie. Building the barrier itself is estimated to cost between \$15 million and \$25 million.

Engineers will confront the complex job of "finding something that deters suicides while keeping the flavor of the bridge in its original art deco style," Currie said.

Hughes may join State Department

WASHINGTON — Karen Hughes, one of President Bush's closest confidants who left the White House nearly three years ago to return home to Austin, Texas, has accepted a key post in the State Department, administration officials said Friday.

Hughes — who has continued to advise the president, most visibly during the final stretch of his re-election campaign — will be nominated by him to be undersecretary of state for public diplomacy, the officials said on the condition of anonymity.

The undersecretary, who must be confirmed by the Senate, deals with polishing the U.S. image abroad.

She sent word through her Austin office Thursday that she would have no comment. The announcement of her appointment, though, is expected as early as Monday.

Schwarzenegger made 'news' videos

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's administration has acknowledged making several videos masquerading as news stories to promote its agenda, creating an uproar from Democrats and labor leaders in a controversy parallel to one ignited by the Bush administration.

"When the governor produces official government propaganda and tries to fake it to look like news it's very, very corrosive to democratic values," said Barry Broad, a labor lobbyist who compared it to efforts by totalitarian regimes.

Criticism initially focused on a video promoting labor regulations altering workers' meal breaks. But the administration later said it made videos on other Schwarzenegger initiatives, as well.

Critics said the tailored-for-TV news videos amount to taxpayer-funded campaign propaganda.

From wire services



Fifteen-month-old Qudrat Wardak, of Afghanistan, is carried Tuesday by his father, Hakimul Wardak, 32, in Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. Surgeons operated on the reversed blood vessels in Qudrat's heart. The U.S. military flew the boy and his father to the States after an Indiana National Guard doctor diagnosed the child's heart problem.

Afghan child doing well after surgery

15-month-old gets heart defect repaired at hospital in Indiana

BY JEANINE IBRAHIM
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — A 15-month-old Afghan boy was breathing on his own Wednesday following surgery to repair a life-threatening heart defect that had been diagnosed by a U.S. military doctor working in a refugee camp.

Surgeons at the Riley Hospital for Children operated on Qudrat Wardak for about six hours Tuesday to move the reversed main blood vessels in his heart into their proper place.

Dr. Mark Turnentine said Tuesday he was pleased and thankful to see Qudrat doing so well after the high-risk operation. The boy was listed in serious but stable condition Wednesday.

"He's doing rather well," hospital spokesman Jon Mills said. The first 24 to 48 hours after surgery are the most critical, as doctors must monitor Qudrat to ensure that his heart is functioning properly, Turnentine said.

"Once he's taking formula and we know he's doing well on his own, he could be released," said Dr. Robert Darragh, a pediatric cardiologist.

The U.S. military flew Qudrat and his father from Afghanistan nearly two weeks ago for the surgery after an Indiana National

Guard doctor diagnosed the heart problem during an exam at the camp in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

After Qudrat is discharged, he will need further monitoring for a couple of weeks and then be able to go back to Afghanistan, where he most likely would not need any medication or medical assistance, Darragh said.

Qudrat's condition is called transposition of the great arteries, in which the aorta and pulmonary artery are reversed, sending oxygen-rich blood from the heart to the lungs and oxygen-poor blood into the rest of the body.

The boy, who at 13 pounds weighs about as much as a typical 5-month-old, also suffers from other heart problems, which combine to restrict his blood flow and stunt his development, Riley doctors have said.

Qudrat's father, Hakimul Wardak, 32, was exhausted after staying up all night Monday with his son and then Tuesday morning carrying him into the operating room.

"He's very overwhelmed and happy after he saw his son in the operating room and doctors told him how super Qudrat was feeling," Wardak's interpreter said.

The surgeons were donating their time to help the boy, and the local Rotary Club is covering other costs.

Ky. smokers brace for tax hike

BY BRUCE SCHREINER
The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Kentucky smokers, long accustomed to a barely noticeable cigarette tax, just learned that tobacco isn't as big here as it used to be.

The state's 3-cent-per-pack cigarette tax — the lowest in the nation — is rising by 27 cents June 1, as part of a tax overhaul passed by the General Assembly this week in hopes of solving the state's fiscal woes.

Other major tobacco-producing states including Virginia and North Carolina recently approved or are considering cigarette tax increases, but that hasn't kept Kentucky smokers from feeling singled out.

"It just shows me the politicians tax the things they care about the least," Barbara Danford said while buying a pack of cigarettes at a Cox's Smokers Outlet in a working-class neighborhood.

"That's the one market that they know no matter how much they raise it, the people that really want to smoke are going to pay," she said.

Gov. Ernie Fletcher, a physician who originally proposed a 31-cent increase, called it a "historic" day for Kentucky, the nation's leading producer of burley tobacco, to increase its cigarette tax.

"This sends a very strong health message to Kentuckians about tobacco and its use," he said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said last year that Kentucky has the nation's highest adult smoking rate at nearly 31 percent, and another federal report said the state has the nation's highest lung-cancer death rate among men.

When health advocates first floated the idea of raising Kentucky's cigarette tax several years ago, "they

were practically laughing out of Frankfort," said Tonya Chang, state director of advocacy for the American Heart Association.

"It's a sign of the times that we're no longer as beholden to tobacco interests as we once were," she said.

In some parts of the country, state and local cigarette taxes can add up to \$2 or even \$3 a pack, but states that relied heavily on tobacco crops had long kept their taxes at a nickel or less. But with tighter state budgets and tobacco revenue decreasing, even those states have given the tax a second look.

Eighteen-year-old Mike Hardy, who leaned against his brother's car while taking a long drag on his cigarette outside Cox's, said higher taxes will only hurt tobacco farmers.

"It is Kentucky's main cash



Mike Hardy, 18, finishes a cigarette Wednesday in Louisville, Ky. Starting June 1, the 3-cent-per-pack cigarette tax goes up by 27 cents. Hardy says that will reduce sales and hurt tobacco farmers.

crop," Hardy said. "The more they raise [the tax], the more people are not going to smoke, and it puts our farmers out of business."

But Kentucky's tobacco sector already has shrunk considerably.

Tobacco sales that exceeded \$900 million annually in the late 1990s could drop below \$400 million this year as fewer farmers grow leaf in the wake of a tobacco buyout that ended the government's price-support system.

Tobacco's manufacturing and corporate presence, meanwhile, has faded. Cigarette-maker Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. departed Louisville after merging with R.J. Reynolds, and a Philip Morris plant in Louisville closed several years ago.

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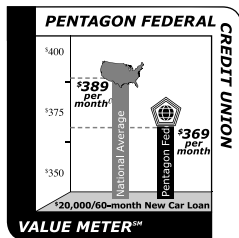
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New heart pump gives tiniest patients hope

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Shanah Bridgett's heart failed when she was only 8. Carlos Ochoa was 7 when his heart began to stiffen, limiting its pumping ability. Miles Coulson was just weeks old when doctors discovered he had an enlarged heart.

All of these children may have died, doctors say, if not for an experimental, child-size artificial heart pump that kept them alive while awaiting transplants.

For years, pumps have been used successfully for adults awaiting transplants. But only recently have U.S. researchers focused attention on devices for the tiniest heart patients. Because so few children need such technology — maybe 30 or 40 a year in the United States — there has been no commercial interest in producing such pumps here.

At Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, surgeons have been working with a European ventricular assist device called the Berlin Heart. They have implanted the device, approved for use in Europe, in Shanah and another child.

"It's the difference between a dead child and a live child," said Dr. Steven Webber, medical director of the hospital's heart transplant program.

Shanah was near death when she got her implant; eight days later, she received a donor heart. Now her mother often has to scold her for doing one-handed cartwheels. "She's doing phenomenal," said Lori Bridgett, of Pittsburgh.

The pediatric Berlin Heart has

only been used in the United States 12 times, in each case with emergency government approval.

The German company that makes the device, Berlin Heart AG, plans to seek approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, said chief executive Rene Garo.

Some children develop heart disease from a virus or other illness; others — more than 30,000 a year in the United States — are born with heart defects, according to the National Institutes of Health. Surgery helps in many cases, but for some the only solu-

tion is a transplant, which means waiting for a donor.

Webber said about 25 percent of children waiting for new hearts die before receiving a transplant, and the Berlin Heart could reduce that number.

The device, also known as EXCOR, sits outside of the body and is connected to the heart and vessels by a pair of tubes. It takes some of the workload off the ventricles by taking blood from the atria and pumping it to the lungs and then the body.

But there's been little incentive for U.S. companies to invest in manufacturing these or going

through the lengthy and expensive FDA approval process, said Dr. Mark W. Turrentine, co-director of Pediatric Cardiac and Pulmonary Transplantation at the Indiana University School of Medicine.

"They really couldn't justify that cost because it's such a low-volume market. They'd never recoup the cost," he said.

Berlin Heart pumps have been used three times on children at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, where Turrentine is a surgeon.



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Mayor, judge charged in voting scandal

The Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — The mayor and a circuit court judge surrendered Friday on a felony charge that they paid a campaign worker to collect absentee ballots, and the mayor was suspended from his post.

A defense attorney denied charges against Mayor Buddy Dyer, Circuit Court Judge Alan Apte and two others who also turned themselves in on similar indictments — Dyer campaign manager Patty Sharp and Ezzie Thomas, a campaign consultant to Dyer and Apte.

Apte has been "unassigned" and his docket has been turned over to another judge, said Karen Levey, a spokeswoman for the 9th Judicial Circuit of Florida.

Dyer, a Democrat, called the charge politically motivated and said he intends to fight it. He could return to his \$144,349-a-year job if he is successful.

The indictments were issued a day earlier by a grand jury looking at whether Thomas illegally collected absentee ballots in predominantly black neighborhoods for Dyer's and Apte's campaigns a year ago in this city of 186,000 residents.

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New Orleans drunk on its spirited past

BY JANET MCCONNAUGHEY

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — This city's liquid assets, from absinthe to iced tea, are getting a lot of attention these days.

The Louisiana State Museum has an exhibit of New Orleans beverages from bourbon to B&Ws. A cocktail museum opened recently. A Southern Comfort Museum is in the works. And a group dedicated to the many cultures of Southern food is looking to collect oral histories from the city's bartenders.

What does it all mean? "We make everything an art form," says Beverly Gianna, spokeswoman for the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau. "I think the fact that we can take our food and beverage and have museums centered around that just emphasizes and underscores the joie de vivre of New Orleans. Our great spirit. Or spirits."

But then, you might expect liquor exhibits and bartender history in a city where a top attraction is Bourbon Street. OK, it's named after some old French rulers. But they're not around any more. Bars are. The 13 blocks of Bourbon Street include at least 20 bars and cocktail lounges.

"There's a lot of interesting scholarship about cocktails and New Orleans," says Amy Evans, who is looking for bartenders to interview later this month. She cited Kerri McCafferty's photographic history

book "Obituary Cocktail: The Great Saloons of New Orleans."

"Bartenders are the keepers of history and tradition and gossip and lore that is really a mother lode," Evans says.

This is the latest of several oral history projects she's done for the Southern Foodways Alliance, an affiliate of the University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture.

The project is sponsored by Southern Comfort, which hasn't been made here for more than a century. But its label shows a mansion only an hour or so from the French Quarter, where a New Orleans bartender created the recipe 130 years ago.

Martin Wilkes Heron developed the drink in 1874, according to Brown-Forman Corp., which counts Southern Comfort among its 34 or 35 liquor and wine brands.

Heron didn't work on Bourbon Street but nearby, at a long-vanished joint called McCauley's Saloon. The drink's original name was "Cuffs and Buttons" — a nod to a popular New Orleans drink called "White Tie and Tails," says Paul Tuell, Brown-Forman's brand director for Southern Comfort.

About all Tuell knows about that drink is its name, and a reasonable guess about the main ingredient. "All of them were, at that point, whiskey based," he says.

"A Toast of New Orleans: A Salute to the Beverages of the City," which opened this past week, goes well beyond alcohol. Its topic is any drink created in or connected



Elizabeth Williams, president of the Southern Food and Beverage Museum, stands before an exhibit featuring non-alcoholic and intoxicating beverages in New Orleans last year.

to the city, including soft drinks such as Barq's root beer, which went national when Coca Cola Co. bought it; iced tea (often written without its "d"), coffee with chicory and cafe au lait. Then there's all the alcohol, including the 13 breweries which once operated here, and the "go cup" — plastic cups kept at bars so that if you leave without finishing, you can take it with you.

The Southern Food and Beverage Museum put it up in donated space at the River-

walk mall, this showing is in the Old U.S. Mint at the edge of the French Quarter.

Bloody Mary enthusiasts may want to make plans to visit the Tabasco Museum, set to open next year a few blocks from the French Quarter in the city's Arts/Warehouse District.

"My great-grandfather Edmund McIlhenny was part of the Americanization of New Orleans. Coincidentally, it's in part of the city he helped build," said Paul McIlhenny, chief executive of Tabasco maker McIlhenny Co.



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Daytona complex reveals new era of biker hangouts

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER

The Associated Press

ORMOND BEACH, Fla. — Just as gamblers have Las Vegas and theme park junkies have Orlando, bikers soon will have Destination Daytona.

The 150-acre complex, as envisioned by its developers, will have condominiums, hotel rooms, a Harley-Davidson dealership, a motorcycle maintenance school, a motorcycle parts shop, restaurants, bars and a civic center.

The project reflects the changing demographics of bikers. In the past two decades, motorcycling has attracted wealthier, older people and more women, and they no longer settle for the usual tent lodgings and souvenir T-shirts at biker gatherings.

Although Daytona Beach and surrounding communities have long been biker havens, there never has been a self-contained complex with so many biker-related venues in one place.

"People have more discretionary income and want to enjoy their motorcycles and want to enjoy their nice hotel and aren't afraid to spend money to do that," said John Parham, owner of J&P Cycles, which sells motorcycle parts and will open a store at Destination Daytona.

Many motorcyclists these days are middle-aged "guys or gals

who might have ridden in the 1970s and really liked it but then had a family," said Mike Mount, a spokesman for the Motorcycle Industry Council. "Now that the kids are gone and they have more disposable income, they have motorcycles back on the want list."

The first phase of Destination Daytona opens in June, but it has gotten plenty of attention at this year's Bike Week, the gathering of hundreds of thousands of motorcyclists in the Daytona Beach area last week.

"This is like, if not a Fantasyland, a Disneyland for motorcycle enthusiasts," said Jim Betlach, who works for biker magazine publisher Paisano Publications.

The \$50 million project was the brainchild of Bruce Meyer, owner of 10 Harley-Davidson dealerships.

He plans to offer to fly customers down to Daytona Beach, put them up at a hotel at Destination Daytona, feed them, sell them bikes, take them on short rides to either St. Augustine or Walt Disney World and then fly them back. Several days later, their Harleys would be delivered to their homes.

"Today, it's like doctors and attorneys," Rossmeier said.

"They come out. They don't shave for a week. They've got their pressed jeans and Gucci shoes and they think they're bikers. But they're out having fun."

"This is like, if not a Fantasyland, a Disneyland for motorcycle enthusiasts."

Jim Betlach

Paisano Publications



A&E, GRB/AP

Allyson, a drug addict, prepares to get high in an episode of A&E's reality show "Intervention."

Reality shows depending on vice for topics

BY LYNN ELLER

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Smokers struggling to kick the dangerous habit. The obese aching to shed life-threatening fat. Drug abusers, gamblers and shopaholics challenged to get control of shattered lives.

That's entertainment in the world of AddictTV.

Networks have found there is wrenching drama in putting human weakness and the fight to overcome it on camera.

"Cold Turkey," beginning its second season on Fox this week in the States, gathers 10 smokers on the pretext they've been cast in a reality adventure show. Then they learn the cold truth: there's a contest and a cash prize, but to win they must give up cigarettes without aids.

Players on NBC's "The Biggest Loser," now in production for its second season, know just what they're in for and get help in the form of personal trainers and diet guidance.

But, like lab rats left in the care of a bored technician, the shows work with their subjects. On "Cold Turkey," a sexy blonde and frat boys are brought in to blow smoke, literally, at contestants whose nerves and willpower are frayed.

"The Biggest Loser" makes fattening food easily available. The rationale is that the outside world contains temptations, so the shows should, too. Accepting that requires one to believe that networks are more interested in salvaging wounds than in earning ratings.

That unlikelihood isn't a hindrance to the self-important tone that infuses the shows.

"Ultimately, they're fighting for something much bigger than a cash prize," says a sanctimonious Mother Love, who serves as host of a "Cold Turkey" reunion show.

Better still: Charo — yes, "cuchi cuchi" Charo — visiting the valiant "Cold Turkey" warriors and advising them, "You are about to be heroes" and "You are fighting a cause not only for you, but for millions of people."

Could a class of programs that at first glance seems so clearly exploitative be defensible? To hear those with the most at stake tell it, yes.

In the first season of "Cold Turkey," lung cancer victim Deborah Taylor met with contestants and implored them to end the habit that would ultimately prove fatal for her.

"She kept saying she was very proud she had done that. ... She was proud that she may have made a difference for some people," her doctor recounts in a reunion show.

Allyson sees it that way. The former drug abuser is among those featured in A&E's new series "Intervention," in which addicts get a shot at recovery after revealing how far they have fallen.

"I would do it again in a heartbeat," she said of the documentary program.

Allyson, 27, figured to take part because she'd agreed the only thing she had left was a cautionary tale.

"I thought I was going to end up dying anyway, so I might as well have done something before I checked out."

But each addict is surprised by loved ones who gather, with a professional "interventionist," to persuade them to enter therapy.

"With this series there is real potential for an amazing personal transformation each week," A&E documentary programming executive Nancy Dubuc said. "If the intervention doesn't succeed, viewers will still be witness to a portrait of the unrelenting power of addiction."

Federal court upholds most FCC phone number-switching rules

BY GENARO C. ARMAS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal court on Friday upheld the bulk of Federal Communications Commission rules that allow consumers to keep their phone numbers when they switch providers.

However, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that smaller traditional phone companies didn't have to honor customer requests to transfer a landline number to a cell phone.

The court said the agency needed to study further the impact of the new rules on small companies before the guidelines could go back into effect in those cases. The companies, which serve mainly rural areas, can still voluntarily switch home numbers to a cell phone.

One consumer group said the decision might affect companies that serve as much as 10 percent of the U.S. population, or more than 29 million people.

"We hope the FCC will go back and fill in the

record and help consumers in small, rural markets have the flexibility to take their numbers to the provider of their choice," said Gene Kimmelman, senior policy director at Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell said he was confident the agency would respond quickly to the court's request.

The ruling was one of two decisions from the appeals court Friday involving the FCC's number-switching rules. The court upheld the remainder of those rules.

Powell, who is leaving the agency this month, praised the decisions overall as "a big win for competition and wireless consumers."

According to the FCC, roughly 10 million cell customers have transferred their numbers to new providers since the rules went into effect in November 2003. Consumer advocates predicted the changes would lead to lower prices, better service and more options for phone customers. Many customers had been reluctant to switch service because it required changing numbers they had given to relatives, friends and business associates.



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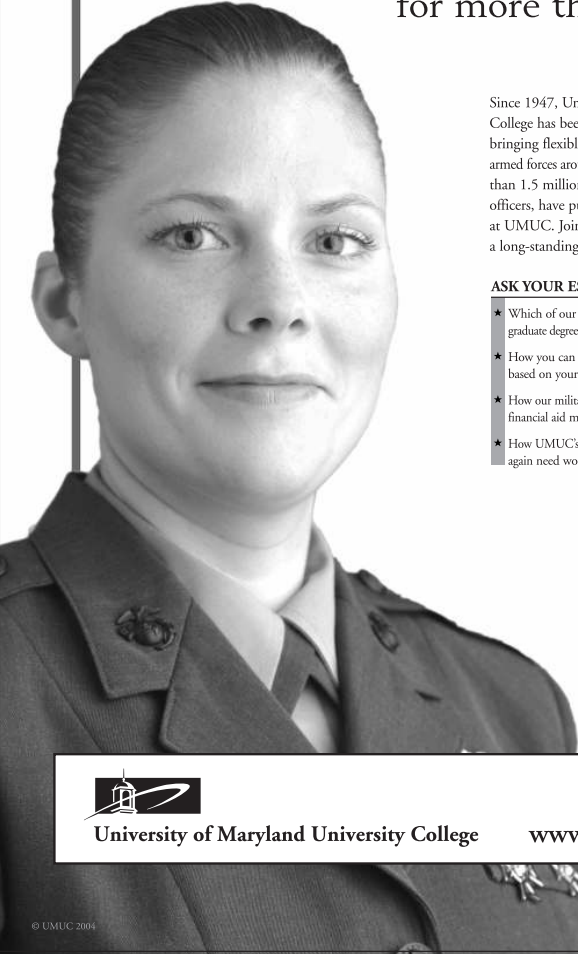
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IN THE WORLD



Donald Tsang, center, is surrounded with security guards as he arrives at Hong Kong government headquarters Thursday. Tsang is replacing the much-maligned Tung Chee-hwa as the leader of Hong Kong. Chee-hwa quit two days ago, citing failing health.

Tsang takes over as Hong Kong's leader

BY WILLIAM FOREMAN
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Donald Tsang, a popular bow tie-wearing career civil servant, took over as Hong Kong's leader Saturday, facing the tough task of pleasing a public that wants more democracy while obeying Communist Chinese rulers who have opposed calls for greater freedom.

Tsang became Hong Kong's second leader since the former British colony returned to Chinese rule eight years ago. He replaces the much-maligned Tung Chee-hwa, who quit two days ago citing failing health.

Wearing one of his trademark bow ties, Tsang told a news conference that he was grateful to Tung "for his selfless leadership."

Tsang said all the Cabinet mem-

bers have asked to continue serving and that he would be the acting leader until a new one is elected on July 10. Under the law, the leader is elected by an 800-member committee, dominated by people loyal to Beijing.

Tsang declined to say whether he planned to run in the election, though he's widely expected to. He said the elected leader would serve until the next originally scheduled election in 2007.

He faces some serious challenges, including leading a Cabinet that might contain stab-biting politicians who want his job, analysts said.

Tsang's policies might also be thwarted by pro-Beijing lawmakers who distrust him. Democracy groups might pressure him for more freedom, while China might demand that he show his loyalty by blocking political reforms.

British parliament OKs controversial terror law

BY JILL LAWLESS
The Associated Press

LONDON — Britain's governing Labour Party claimed victory Saturday for pushing through its contentious anti-terrorism law after an acrimonious two-day debate in Parliament. The opposition said it had forced the government to make key changes to the legislation.

"The British public will not be impressed with the way this government has made such a muddle and mess of what is possibly one of the most important bills of modern times," said David Davis, home-affairs spokesman for the opposition Conservative Party.

Ten suspects who had been detained without trial for up to three years — including a radical preacher accused of links to al-Qaida — were free, although they faced "control orders" imposing a nighttime curfew and strict restrictions on their activities.

Prime Minister Tony Blair won the support of Parliament for the Prevention of Terrorism Bill on Friday, after one of the longest and bitterest standoffs in recent Parliamentary history.

The law allows terrorist suspects to be put under house arrest or curfew or electronically tagged without charge or trial.

The main opposition Conservatives had opposed the legislation, saying it would infringe civil liberties and demanding a so-called sunset clause guaranteeing that the law would expire a year after being passed. The government claimed such an amendment would send a message that Britain was soft on terrorism.

To break the deadlock, Blair eventually agreed to a timetable for Parliament to review and amend the law and promised Parliament time to draft more wide-ranging legislation later in the year. The Conservatives said that was a sunset clause in all but name.

Iran says it will continue to pursue nuke program

U.S. threats, policy shifts unsuccessful

BY NASSER KARIMI
The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Neither threats nor incentives will alter Iran's pursuit of its nuclear program, the Iranian foreign ministry said Saturday, despite new moves by the European Union and the United States to ensure Tehran never develops a nuclear bomb.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi rejected overtures from the West, saying Iran would not be influenced by external pressure. Iran maintains its nuclear program is solely for the peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy.

"Iran is determined to use peaceful nuclear technology and no pressure, incentive or threat can force Iran to give up its rights," state-run radio quoted Asefi as saying.

The show of bluster and defiance came a day after the Bush administration softened its stance on how to thwart Iran's suspected nu-

clear arms program, agreeing to support a European plan that offers economic incentives for the Tehran government to give up any weapons ambitions.

Washington also agreed to drop its opposition to Iran's membership of the World Trade Organization and allow some sale of spare parts for civilian aircraft. But Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signaled that Iran should move quickly or face the threat of harsh United Nations Security Council sanctions.

Asefi rejected Washington's move.

"Lifting some restrictions against Iran will not stop Iran from pursuing its rights," Asefi said.

Washington has accused Tehran of using its civilian nuclear program as a cover to build a nuclear bomb and previously had insisted Iran deserves no reward for simply abiding by an international arms compact that forbids nuclear weapons development.

Iran suspended its uranium enrichment activities last year to create confidence in its negotiations and avoid Security Council referral. But Tehran says maintaining the voluntary freeze depends on progress in ongoing talks with Britain, Germany and France, who are negotiating on behalf of the European Union.

The Europeans want to get an Iranian commitment to scrap enrichment plans in exchange for economic aid, technical support and backing for Tehran's efforts to join mainstream international organizations.

Russia, meanwhile, welcomed the softening of the U.S. stance.

Russia hopes U.S. actions will conform with "the line that both Russia and Western European countries are pursuing in efforts to remove all questions relating to the character of Iran's nuclear program on the basis of cooperation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko said.

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Three bodies found after Europe avalanches

The Associated Press

SALZBURG, Austria — Rescuers on Friday found the bodies of three tourists from Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany killed by separate avalanches in different ski resorts, police said.

Mountain rescuers found the body of a 47-year-old Danish man Friday, the Austria Press Agency reported, citing police. He was buried under about three feet of snow near the resort of St. Johann, some 40 miles south of Salzburg.

The rescuers said the avalanche had been triggered by the victim.

The man had been reported missing after he did not return to his hotel Thursday evening. He had been skiing with his nephews until the middle of the day Thursday, when the group became separated.

In the western province of Tyrol, authorities on Friday found the body of a snowboarder who had been swept away by an avalanche a day earlier, APA reported. The 23-year-old German had been boarding in Achenkirch, located about 25 miles northeast of Innsbruck.

Also Friday, a 21-year-old Dutch snowboarder died after being caught in avalanche in Zillertal, in Tyrol. Rescuers found the body of the tourist, who was carrying an avalanche transmitter, about 30 minutes after the snow slide went off.

So far this season, avalanches in Austria's Alps have killed 32 people, far more than last season's unusual low of eight. On average, snow slides in Austria kill about two dozen people each year.



Unidentified defendants, center, are brought by police officers to the courthouse Thursday in Angers, France, where 66 people are on trial for allegedly prostituting children for food and money.

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Grim testimony given at France pedophilia trial

BY STEPHANIE LACAZE

The Associated Press

ANGERS, France — Defendants painted a grim picture of family torment Friday during a pedophilia trial where one woman said she had been raped by her adoptive father and attempted to explain why she never reported the abuse of her own children.

It was the second day of questioning of some of the 66 people accused of involvement in the rape, sexual abuse and prostitution of children — some too young to walk — in this city some 165 miles southwest of Paris.

Investigators say 45 children — between the ages of 6 months and 14 years — were abused by their parents or their acquaintances from 1999 to 2002, in some cases in exchange for small amounts of money, food, cigarettes or alcohol.

The defendants, expressing themselves with difficulty, offered little insight into their actions or into the dynamics of a group ensnared in a pattern of child abuse and pedophilia passed on from one generation to the next.

A defendant identified as Patricia M. said she had been an abandoned child and as a little girl had been raped by her adoptive father. Now she stands accused of raping, sexually abusing, corrupting and prostituting children.

She could face 20 years' imprisonment. Under French law, she, like other defendants, can only be identified by a first name and initial to preserve the anonymity of the alleged child victims.

Patricia's adoptive father, 60-year-old Jean-Claude M., contested her testimony about him, insisting Friday that he treated her as a natural daughter. Jean-Claude M. was convicted in 2001 of sexual abuse of his granddaughter, Marine.

The former husband of Patricia M., her father-in-law and her adoptive father are among the defendants, all testifying Thursday and Friday.

Patricia M. was convicted in 2003 of failure to report the abuse of her own children, but on Friday attempted to justify her reticence.

"It's because M.V. frightened me that I said nothing," Patricia M. said of her former husband, also on trial.

Germany tightens anti-Nazi laws to block march

BERLIN — Parliament on Friday tightened laws against neo-Nazi demonstrations, seeking to block a planned far-right march on the 60th anniversary of the Nazis' surrender and permanently shield the nearby national Holocaust memorial in Berlin.

The bill cited a "steady rise in far-right gatherings that ... resemble ever more the character of the Nazi regime's marches."

Germany already has extensive laws combating neo-Nazi propaganda and banning the display of Nazi symbols. But plans by the far-right National Democratic Party to march at the Brandenburg Gate and one block from the Holocaust memorial on May 8 have raised alarm among politicians and the Jewish community.

From The Associated Press

Thousands flood ailing pope with e-mail

BY WILLIAM J. KOLE
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — He presides over an organization with two millennia of history, but Pope John Paul II is like anyone who's been away from the office for a while: His e-mail is piling up.

The Vatican says it's logged more than 10,000 e-mails in English alone for the pope, who is recovering at a Rome hospital from throat surgery to ease his second breathing crisis in a month. The Vatican said Saturday that the pope might leave the hospital early this week.

More than 6,000 e-mails in Spanish have streamed into the pope's in-box, along with thousands of others in various languages, the Vatican said.

"As far as the content, the common denominator is not only the good wishes but personal memories and episodes of life recounted by those who have been stirred by the words of the pope and his testimony of faith," Vatican Radio reported this week.

"The closeness expressed to the pope is coming from every



Pope John Paul II uses a computer to send a special message to bishops in Oceania via Internet during an audience in the Clementine Hall at the Vatican in November 2001. The Vatican says the pope has received thousands and thousands of e-mails from across the globe expressing support for his recovery from throat surgery.

part of the world," it said. "The flow of messages doesn't stop."

The Vatican won't say how much — if any — e-mail the 84-year-old pontiff actually reads or responds to, but John Paul seems comfortable with the medi-

um. In 2001, sitting in the Vatican's frescoed Clementine Hall, he used a laptop to tap out an apology for Roman Catholic missionary abuses against indigenous peoples of the South Pacific.

"The pope sees some of the

messages, but I don't know how many," hospital spokesman Nicola Cerbino said Tuesday. "All the messages that are received by the pope get an official response."

More time-honored expressions of affection and support such as letters, telegrams and poems also have poured in for the pope. This week, the Vatican released letters and drawings sent by Italian third-graders, who drew a smiling pope waving a cane and pictures of the pontiff in his hospital bed. Even prisoners have been writing to the pope.

The pope on several occasions has relayed his thanks "for all those signs of affection that have reached me" since he was rushed by ambulance back to Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic hospital on Feb. 24 for an operation to insert a breathing tube in his windpipe.

The Vatican says it expects John Paul to be released from the hospital by Palm Sunday, March 20.

On Friday, the Vatican released a video with the pope speaking, the first time the pontiff has been heard publicly since a throat operation last month to help him breathe.

The video was taken of a meeting Friday with Tanzanian prelates in the pope's hospital room.

He says a few words in a husky voice, including *vu bene*, Italian for "OK."

The 84-year-old pontiff is shown seated during a Mass with the prelates.

His voice reciting a prayer is barely audible.

The two — Cardinal Polycarp Pengo and Bishop Severine Niwemugizi — are shown telling him in English that Tanzanians are praying for him and love him.

He responded with the two Italian words.

The meeting was an indication that the frail pontiff was stepping up his activities before returning to the Vatican.

John Paul has taken a cautious approach to e-mail and the Internet, speaking out against the proliferation of online pornography and hate speech and the industry's need to police itself and meet the "ethical and spiritual challenges" raised as communications technology evolves.

Does the pope get spam? The Vatican won't say.

Italians restore a rare fresco portrait of Dante

BY MARTA FALCONI
The Associated Press

ROME — A prominent nose and severe expression were believed to be among his most distinguishing features, but Dante Alighieri might now show a different face to posterity.

A seven-month restoration has stripped layers of grime and revealed the splendor of a 17th-century frescoed portrait that art historians believe might be the most ancient of the medieval poet who wrote the "Divine Comedy."

Monica Donato, an art historian and professor at Parma University, is among the experts who have studied the frescos.

"We identified the portrait as Dante's thanks to archive documentation, as well as manuscripts and drawings," Donato said.

"It is certainly the most antique documented portrait of the medieval poet."

The fresco shows a quiet short man in profile, with a dark complexion, prominent lower lip and a long nose.

"This fresco shows a different face compared to the one we used to know from Renaissance tradi-

tional iconography," Donato said. The most eye-catching difference, she said, is the poet's nose, his best-known feature, which is traditionally portrayed as large and hooked.

"In the Renaissance, he was pictured as a serious-looking figure, even surly," Donato said.

"In these frescos he doesn't have such marked traits and he generally looks more relaxed."

The almost life-sized frescos, including samples of Petrarcha and Boccaccio, are set in moon-shaped lunettes in the vaulted ceiling of the "Arte dei Giudici e Notai" (Judges and Notaries Art) hall, a building that hosted one of the governing bodies in medieval Florence.

Visitors and tourists will soon be able to look directly at Dante's face and perhaps even dine beneath it.

Umberto Montano, owner of the Alle Muratte restaurant in Florence, is planning to move his restaurant into the building's hall.

"I commissioned and funded this restoration because I was looking for a better venue for my restaurant and such a prestigious spot might be just ideal," he said.

"We will be the guardians of this wonderful artistic and historical heritage."



Young Hercules beetles are seen at the lab of German Viasus, Colombia's only beetle exporter, in Tunja, Colombia, recently. Fully grown, the giant beetles are exported to Asia as exotic pets, and to museums, scientists and collectors in Europe.

Beetles become valued commodity

BY ZOE SELSKY
The Associated Press

TUNJA, Colombia — University student German Viasus was researching ways to speed the natural decomposition of chicken bones when he came across what has become one of Colombia's weirdest exports.

Viasus found 56 tiny, pearl-like eggs nestled in a pile of rotting wood as he searched for bugs that could break down the tons of chicken bones in the nation's garbage dumps in an environmentally safe manner. He didn't know what would hatch from the eggs, but became attached to them as he waited.

"I took care of those eggs as if they were my babies," he recalls. The eggs finally hatched, producing larvae that grew into the samurai of insects — a fierce-looking

beetle that is one of the largest in the world.

Known as Dynastes Hercules, the beetles are found only in Central and South America. Fully grown, the males measure up to 6.75 inches long, boasting saber-like horns. The females are about half that size.

After making the discovery five years ago, Viasus found the bugs were worthless for breaking down chicken bones. Still, he thought he might be able to make something out of them.

He built a laboratory and breeding center on a hillside outside Tunja, a city 80 miles northeast of the capital, Bogota. Marked by a roadside billboard with a picture of a flying Hercules beetle, the whole facility is just under a half acre.

One day, a group of visiting Japanese businessmen saw the bee-

tes and became wildly enthusiastic. "All they kept saying was 'pretty, pretty, pretty!'" Viasus says. So he hatched the notion of exporting the fierce-looking creatures to Asia and Europe.

Live male Hercules beetles sell for around \$130 apiece, while preserved dead specimens sell for slightly less. Live females go for between \$40 and \$50, with dead ones also selling for less.

The live beetles are shipped in small, clear plastic containers to Japan, China and Thailand, where they are sought as exotic pets. Dead ones are sent to collectors, museums and scientists in Europe.

Under Colombian law, Viasus — Colombia's only registered beetle exporter — says he is allowed to export a maximum of 300 live beetles and 100 dead beetles a month, to avoid endangering the species.

Fumigation overload

CT STAMFORD — Several tenants had to stay in a temporary shelter and a hotel because of a landlord's attempt to fumigate a 10-family home.

The landlord apparently touched off 40 cans of the cockroach fumigate at the same time.

"One can is plenty," Dr. Johnnie Lee, the city's health director, who spent much of the day setting up a temporary shelter for tenants.

The incident forced about a dozen of the building's 50 tenants to spend the day across the street at the International School at Rogers Magnet School, health and fire officials said.

Drought emergency

WA OLYMPIA — Gov. Christine Gregoire declared a statewide drought emergency, anticipating what weather forecasters predict will be the Pacific Northwest's worst dry spell in nearly three decades.

Gregoire made her announcement before an audience of farmers in the already arid Yakima Valley. The last statewide drought emergency was declared by Gov. Gary Locke in 2001.

In the declaration, Gregoire creates an interstate agency to coordinate the government's response, calls for \$8.2 million more in drought-related state appropriations and orders the National Guard to prepare to combat wildfires this summer.

Movie bill fails

CT HARTFORD — The state General Assembly decided not to vote on a bill that would have forced theaters to print the start times of both the previews and the movie. State Rep. Andrew Fleischmann said he heard from dozens of moviegoers who support the bill. He plans to reintroduce the measure next year.

Alcoholism drug tested

AK JUNEAU — Yale University researchers are working with health officials in southeast Alaska on a study of the natural alcoholism with the drug naltrexone. Naltrexone blocks the effects of drugs in the brain that includes morphine and heroin.

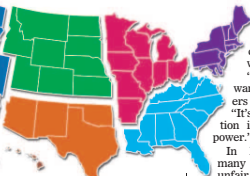
Researchers have found naltrexone can also treat the effects of alcoholism.

Baseball subway service

DC WASHINGTON — The city's subway system is adding \$1.2 million to its fiscal 2005 budget to cover extra service during the Washington Nationals debut season. But if a game ends after the subway closes, transit officials said, the baseball team would have to pay the extra cost to keep Metro open. So far, Metro doesn't have an agreement with the Nationals.

Buses go with ethanol

NE LINCOLN — The public buses in Nebraska's capital will be the first in the United



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States fueled with an ethanol diesel blend, known as O2Diesel, Mayor Coleen Seng said. About three-fourths of the fleet has already converted to the blend.

Ethanol is big business in Nebraska, with 25 percent of the current corn crop being used to produce the fuel.

Redrawing district lines

GA ATLANTA — The state House approved a new set of congressional districts, rearranging the 13 districts passed in 2001 when Democrats ran state government. If approved by the Senate and Gov. Sonny Perdue, the new districts could be in place by the 2006 elections. Georgia has seven Republicans and six Democrats in the U.S. House.

Hair-braking tangle

MS JACKSON — To hear one side tell it, African hair braiding is an art passed down through generations, a form of expression that shouldn't be hampered by bureaucratic licensing. The other side argues the practice needs to be regulated so braiders will learn to prevent the spread of scalp diseases.

Now, state lawmakers across the United States are trying to untangle the issue.



Dragon dance

Cynthia Worthington, 18, a freshman from Piedmont, S.C., smiles as she gets a first-time look inside a dragon dance costume at the first Clemson University Asian New Year Celebration at the Outdoor Theater in Clemson, S.C.

Tennessee state Sen. Steve Cohen filed a bill at the request of a constituent who braids.

"The cosmetologists want to keep the hair braiders down," Cohen charged. "It's not a health and sanitation issue. It's control. It's power."

In Mississippi, however, many cosmetologists say it's unfair to exempt a small group from licensing.

Pot charges for teacher

CA FRESNO — Christopher Bochinn, a substitute teacher, was arrested for allegedly smoking marijuana with students at Fresno High School. Bochinn, 22, allegedly asked two students to get the marijuana and drug paraphernalia out of his car before smoking it with several students. He faces felony charges of furnishing marijuana to minors and misdemeanor charges of contributing to the delinquency of minors.

Rash death charges

PA JOHNSTOWN — The mother and grandmother of a toddler who died in December face criminal charges for allegedly neglecting his severe diaper rash, leading to a fatal infection.

Amy Livingston, 27, of Johnstown, was charged with involuntary manslaughter and child endangerment in the Dec. 12 death of her 15-month-old son, Harley. She was charged with a second count of child endangerment because another son, 3-year-old Hunter, also had severe diaper rash, authorities said.

Miss Hawaii court

HI HONOLULU — A former Miss Hawaii USA was given a chance to have drug charges against her dropped if she completes a residential drug treatment program and stays out of trouble for five years.

Circuit Judge Richard Perkins granted a request to defer Tiffini Limahai's guilty pleas to charges of possessing crystal methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia.

Limahai and her husband, John Limahai Jr., were arrested Sept. 14 in a police raid on their Kaliua home.

Police said they found about \$1,000 worth of ice, small quantities of rock cocaine and marijuana, and a digital scale in a backpack that Limahai was seen discarding.

City Deputy Prosecutor Marvin Rampey opposed the defense request for deferral and asked that Limahai be sentenced to one year in jail.

No pies at the polls

MS ECRU — Mayoral candidate Iyonne Whitehead stopped giving away tasty treats after being accused of using pies and cakes to influence voters. Whitehead said her baking isn't about politics, it's about "my personal life." The Mississippi attorney general's office told Whitehead she can give away her baked goods only to friends, senior citizens and the sick. She can also bake treats for children's birthday parties.



Cuban rhythm

Dancers Yoandra Martinez, left, and Dennis Bain of the Havana Night Club dance troupe from Cuba, perform in Coral Gables, Fla. The group, made up of over 50 singers, dancers and musicians, defected to the United States in Las Vegas last November.



Moosefest promotion

A moose sculpture promoting the upcoming "Moosefest" in Bennington, Vt., stands outside the Vermont Statehouse in Montpelier, Vt.

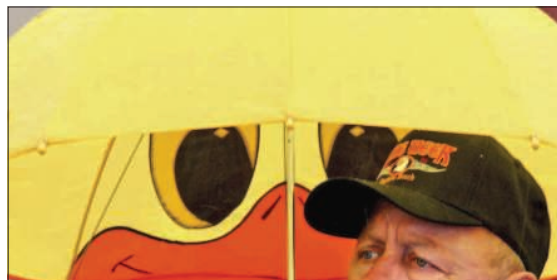


Surprise, surprise!

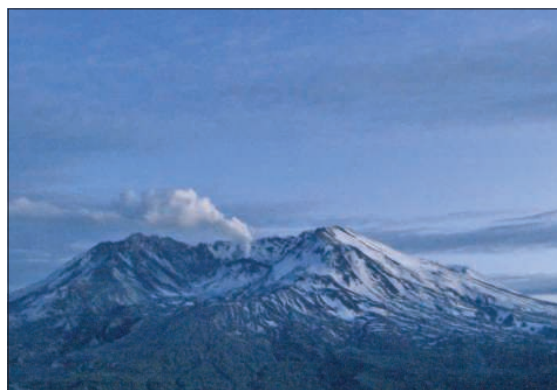
Sgt. Andy Peace holds his daughter, Samantha Peace, 3, after surprising her at the United Methodist Children's Learning Center in Houma, La. Sgt. Peace had been in Iraq since July.



Feeding time John Kloor takes time to feed bread to the ducks and geese in Franke Park during a late-winter snow flurry in Fort Wayne, Ind.



Ducky weather A biker stands in the pouring rain under the protection of his duck umbrella at the Cabbage Patch in Samsula, Fla.



Volcanic reaction Mount St. Helens emits a small, steady cloud of steam at dusk in Washington. Scientists said that there have been no unusual events since a recent steam-burst from the volcano sent an ash cloud 36,000 feet in the air.

Slow to collect her cash

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Barbara Lennen took her time being a multimillionaire.

The mother of four carried the winning ticket for a \$19.9-million Powerball jackpot in her wallet for two days after the drawing before checking the numbers.

Lennen, 28, bought the ticket at a convenience store near her Elwood home, but didn't look to see whether she had won until her father-in-law told her Monday night that the store had sold the jackpot winner for Saturday's drawing.

"I checked the Powerball numbers one at a time. I looked at it three times," she said after claiming the jackpot.

Lennen said after seeing that the numbers matched, she told her husband, "Don't get up. Our lives are changing. We just hit the Powerball."

School paper controversy

CA FULLERTON — The American Civil Liberties Union urged a school district to reinstate a high school newspaper editor who was fired for publishing an article about three gay students.

School officials were wrong to remove student Ann Long from her shared post as editor in chief of Troy High School's newspaper in January, the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California said in a letter to the local superintendent.

Long's Dec. 17 article in the Oracle chronicled the decisions of three students — two 18-year-olds and a 15-year-old — to reveal their homosexuality and bisexuality to family and friends. All three spoke to Long knowing their names would be used.

School officials have argued previously that Long needed parental permission before publishing the students' stories.

Worthless plunder

OH FOSTORIA — Thieves broke into an agency that serves the poor and made off with a safe. The only catch — the safe was empty.

"It is really quite comical," said Susan Simpkins, director of the Fostoria Bureau of Concern. "It was very heavy, and they did us a favor by taking it."

She said the agency had wanted to throw out the safe but it was too big to move.

The thieves did manage to grab a small amount of money from the office's petty cash supply, police said.

DMV-jacking

NV NORTH LAS VEGAS — Thieves rammed a vehicle through the back wall of a Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles office and stole 1,700 bank driver's licenses.

"This could be anything from a bunch of juveniles who want to be able to make IDs to buy beer, to major criminal activity or even terrorism," police spokesman Tim Bedwell said.

"We don't know what they took them for."

The theft occurred in a remote industrial area, authorities said. The thieves took blank licenses and laminated cards, a digital license camera, a camera computer and a license printer. DMV spokesman Kevin Malone said.

The equipment would not work without a connection to the DMV's mainframe computer, Malone said. "It would be very, very difficult to break the encryption," he said.

However, the officials said false information could be placed on blank licenses and covered with authentic laminates and holographic seals, making the fake licenses indistinguishable from the real thing.

Keeping up with traffic

NY NEW YORK — Hang on, Snoopy.

A mixed poodle who was caught running along the Major Deegan Expressway during rush hour underwent X-rays to make sure he hadn't suffered any serious injuries from his escapades, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said.

Aside from some abrasions and bruises from being hit by a car, the dog "so far seems to be doing great," ASPCA spokeswoman Jo Sullivan said. "It appears that he came out miraculously OK."

Tuition curveball

TX COLLEGE STATION — Texas A&M students who load up on classes could get a price break under a new proposal heading to the Board of Regents.

University President Robert Gates has proposed charging a flat rate for tuition, meaning students taking 12 hours or 18 hours would pay the same rate. Students taking 12 or more hours of classes would pay a 15-hour semester credit-hour rate.

Gates said graduating from A&M a semester early would save a student money.

However, Corey Nichols, a member of the university's student senate, said he and other students are opposed to paying for classes they aren't taking.

Stranded hikers

TN GATLINBURG — Park rangers rescued four hikers who had become stranded in snow in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. One had to be airlifted to a hospital.

The sick hiker, Matthew Shultz, was in good condition after he was taken by helicopter to University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville as a precaution, Great Smoky Mountains National Park spokesman Bob Miller said. He had been showing signs of hypothermia, including vomiting and slurred speech.

Using all resources

AR LITTLE ROCK — The old saw about meat-packing houses using everything but the squeal can apparently be applied to poultry as well — everything but the squeak.

Tyson Foods, the world's largest meat producer, is teaming up with a Massachusetts-based company in the hope of making a profit off chicken litter.

Since January 2004, Springfield-based Tyson has been talking with Regenerated Resources LLC, a company located in Framingham, Mass., to convert poultry byproducts into a commercial fertilizer.

Stories and photos from wire services

AFTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/>

SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2005

(AFN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFN-EUROPE)	(AFN-KOREA)	(AFN-NEWS)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFN-PACIFIC)
9:00 House of Mouse	8:59 Movie *** "The Terminator" (1984, Science Fiction) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Michael Biehn	Movie *** "Finger Cries" (2004, Drama) Hayden Panettiere, Bill Pullman	Headline News	Headline News	NASCAR Racing Busch Series - Sam's Town 300. From Las Vegas Motor Speedway in Las Vegas (Live)	Latin Lifestyles	Andromeda "The Torment, the Release"
9:30 Animaniacs' Moby Dick	9:30 E! Ed'n n' Eddy	Headline News	Headline News	America's Black Forum	Urban Style	Headline News	Headline News
10:00 Filmmore "Test of the Testes"	10:00 "Walk in Your Shoes"	Headline News	Headline News	The Chris Matthews Show	Fantasy Camp	Headline News	Headline News
10:30 Planet's Funniest Animals	10:30 Movie *** "Predator" (1987, Action) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A team is stalked by an intergalactic trophy hunter.	Headline News	Headline News	Narylmarine Corps News	Roker on the Road	Headline News	Headline News
11:00 NBA Inside Stuff	11:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
12:00 Happy Days	12:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
13:00 Movie *** "The Thirteenth Year" (1989) Fantasy Cine	13:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
13:30 Star Trek: Voyager	13:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
14:30 Movie "Can of Worms" (1999)	14:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
15:00 Voice of Malcolm McDowell, Michael Shannon	15:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
16:00 Doug (E)	16:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
16:30 The Wild Thornberrys	16:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
17:00 The Fairly OddParents	17:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
17:30 Rugrats Spike is in trouble	17:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
18:00 The Jeff Corwin Experience	18:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
19:00 America's Funniest Home Videos	19:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
20:00 Everwood For Every Action	20:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
21:00 Joan of Arcadia "Only Connect"	21:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
21:30 The Cosby Show	21:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
22:00 Home Improvement	22:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
22:30 Touched by an Angel "Living the Rest of My Life"	22:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
23:30	23:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2005							
00:00 The Fairly OddParents	00:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
00:30 Rugrats	00:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
1:00 Night Vision Specials "Meerkats' Meerkats"	1:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
1:30 America's Funniest Home Videos	1:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
2:00 Everwood For Every Action	2:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
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3:00 The Cosby Show	3:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
3:30 Home Improvement	3:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
4:00 Barney & Friends (E)	4:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
4:30 Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	4:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
5:00 Dragon Tales (E)	5:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
5:30 The Wiggles "Zoo Zap"	5:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
6:00 Dora the Explorer	6:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
6:30 Stanley	6:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
7:00 Sagwa-Siamess Cat	7:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
7:30 Arthur "1001 Dots" (E)	7:30 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
8:00 Reading Rainbow (E)	8:00 "Movie *** 'Twins' (1998) Arnold Schwarzenegger, A genetically enhanced man seeks his shortchanged twin.	Headline News	Headline News	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rockin' Suburban	Headline News	Headline News
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Q Paula Abdul pouts and acts like a child when she doesn't get her way on "American Idol." Why has she become so bratty? — Jack Novascone, Kenosha, Wis.

A There's nothing real about "reality" shows. She denies it, but we think Abdul's spoiled-child act is just that — an act scripted by the show's writers to boost ratings. Now, viewers tune in not only to hear screeching amateurs but also to hear Paula screeching at nasty Simon Cowell.

Q Doesn't Hilary Swank's depiction of a boxer in "Million Dollar Baby" promote the defeminization of women? — Mia Spengler, New York, N.Y.

A Yes — but that's not the main reason we're against women's boxing. In our opinion, no matter how hard women train, their bodies are not made to withstand the brutal punishment meted out in the ring, and they are more susceptible to irreversible injuries than men. We disagree with USA Boxing's decision to lift its ban on women in the sport in 1993.

Q On her last episode as Serena on "Law & Order," Elisabeth Röhm asks if she was fired because she's a lesbian. Was she? Can you tell me about her replacement? — Conrad H., Boise, Idaho

A The new assistant D.A. is Annie Parisse, 31, best known as homicidal Julia Lindsey for four years on the soap "As the World Turns." Röhm, 28, says she secretly knew Serena was a lesbian. If so, she and producer Dick Wolf hid it from the rest of us: Serena's private life was never discussed until that out-of-left-field final episode. We call that bad writing.

Q Your item on Rebecca Romijn made me wonder how John Stamos is doing since their split. — Judith Meredith, Clinton, Tenn.

A Stamos, 41, seems determined to earn the title Playboy of the West Coast. Soon after splitting with Romijn, 32, he hooked up with Krista Allen, 32, who will guest-star on his ABC sitcom "Jake in Progress," premiering stateside tonight. Stamos also has dated waitresses, a nurse and lately socialite Charlotte Freund, 20.



John Stamos appears to be making the most of his single status since his divorce from Rebecca Romijn.



"American Idol" features annoying screeching from judge Paula Abdul, center, as well as contestants.

Q I saw a preview of the film "Ice Princess." Does its teen star, Michelle Trachtenberg, do her own figure skating? — Robyn Richards, Chicago

A "I'm a pretty good skater and took a lot of lessons," Michelle, 19, tells us, "but experts doubled for me on the difficult jumps." They included six-time Canadian national champ Jennifer Robinson, 28, who finished seventh in the 2002 Winter Olympics, and newcomers Lauren Wilson and Sandra Rucker, both 17. "Ice Princess" opens stateside on Friday.

Q Is Donald Trump's new wife, Melania, merely eye candy, or does she play a substantive role in his world? — Ann Jones, Colorado Springs, Colo.

A The third Mrs. Trump, 34, has a good head on her pretty shoulders. In contrast to the tycoon's previous wife, Marla Maples, Melania is very supportive and showers him with affection in public. Friends say The Donald, 53, has never been happier.



Trump: Remarried, and never happier.

Q I adored gossip columnist Liz Smith's book "Natural Blonde." Does she plan to publish another one soon? — H. MacAlister, Nashville, Tenn.

A Yes. "Dishing" — a memoir filled with celebrity recipes and juicy gossip — arrives next month from Simon & Schuster. "As the old saying goes, everything I like is either illegal, immoral or fattening," says Liz, 82. "And some people do view eating as a surrogate for illicit sex. Both are wickedly tempting."

Q How is Ronald Reagan's first wife, Jane Wyman, these days? — J. Jones, Crofton, Md.

A The 91-year-old Oscar winner (1948's "Johnny Belinda") is charming, mentally sharp as ever and involved with the Arthritis Foundation. Wyman and the late president (married 1940-48) had a daughter, Maureen, who died of melanoma in 2001 at 60, and a son, Michael, now 59.



Despite Renee Zellweger's recent choice of hair color, she's still among Hollywood's gold standard.

Q Three of Hollywood's top stars had flops last year: Brad Pitt in "Troy," Tom Cruise in "The Last Samurai" and Renee Zellweger in "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason." Why are they still considered box-office gold? — E. Aldrich, Redding, Conn.

A Those films did disappointing business here but were blockbusters overseas. Worldwide, "Troy" grossed \$497 million, "Samurai" \$319 million and "Jones" \$228 million (plus video sales), which put them in 2004's top 20. In Hollywood, that's the gold standard.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

The death of states' rights? The Observer-Reporter, Washington, Pa.

We won't go as far as columnist George Will did, calling the U.S. Supreme Court's ban on sentencing juveniles to death "an intellectual train wreck." But we acknowledge that even among people who agree with the outcome of this month's decision, there are those who feel the court intruded into an issue that should properly be addressed by state legislatures.

Although the numbers have dwindled in recent years, there were still 18 states that as of this month permitted the execution of people who commit crimes when they are 16 or 17 years old. ... And there is considerable public sentiment for the trend to treat younger criminals as adults. ...

Of course, we don't actually execute juveniles. With the length of the appeals process, we let them grow up on death row before we kill them.

If we really have a problem with that, if there is a national consensus to no longer do so, state legislatures should be under considerable public pressure to change their laws. Unfortunately, there appears to be no such demand, and the Supreme Court has once again stepped into the legislative arena to correct state laws it doesn't agree with. You don't have to agree with such laws either to question if the court overstepped its bounds.

Five-Seven's number is up The Express-Times, Easton, Pa.

A Belgium gun manufacturer has figured out a way to put a large amount of firepower into small packages. Now, why Jersey's two senators are leading the charge to send this gun packing.

The handgun, Five-Seven, is an assault pistol that is lightweight. It's so small that it can easily be tucked inside a pocket. Yet it's so powerful it can rip through bulletproof or Kevlar vests. ...

In November, after police in Connecticut seized one of these guns, our Homeland Security Department issued a safety alert for law enforcement officials. The following month another one of these weapons turned up on the streets of Camden County, N.J., in the hands of an alleged drug dealer. ...

We need to closely protect and defend every American's right to bear arms. But this weapon isn't for any legitimate use. It's a miniature killing machine. And it must be kept out of the hands of criminals. ...

There is no legitimate reason for law-abiding citizens to be packing these armor-piercing pistols. Banning them would in no way weaken the Second Amendment or weaken the power of the National Rifle Association and other gun lobbies. ...

Congress should ban not only the Five-Seven but the class of weapons with the potential to do so much harm. And no good.

Fix Social Security in due time The King County Journal, Bellevue, Wash.

President Bush is still stumping for changing Social Security, but it's become obvious that people want to slow the process down.

Given the significance of any changes, Congress should plan on more discussion and less action. ...

The president wants future retirees to divert part of their Social Security payroll deductions into personal investment accounts, a change that he says would give them the security of greater retirement benefits and take some pressure off Social Security.

That may be what would happen but, like many things, the devil is in the details. So far, the details are far from clear.

What is apparent is that there are many in-

dividuals and organizations with concerns and questions. ...

What's important is to come up with a fix to Social Security that puts the Depression-era program on firm financial ground for the long run. For now, there's no agreement that the president's ideas do this. ...

Republicans in Congress say it may not be possible to craft a Social Security bill this year. That's not necessarily bad, especially if the time is spent further refining and explaining the options to fix the program.

Stewart's plan: A good thing? The Times Herald-Record, Middletown, N.Y.

One of the secrets to living a rewarding life, so the gurus of such things tell us, is being able to glean positive results from whatever comes your way, especially the self-generated nasty stuff. Lemonade from lemons, etc.

Once again, Martha Stewart shows us the way. The maven of stylish living has apparently managed to transform the lackluster of being sentenced to five months in a federal prison into a model for personal rehabilitation. Forget Martha the Merciless, alibi corporate bully. Say hello to Martha the Humble, friend of the downtrodden and advocate for prison reform. ...

But there has always been something a little different about Stewart, something that compels attention. ... What she says and does, likes and dislikes, matters to a lot of people. So if there are positives to be drawn from her incarceration, they ought not be casually dismissed as just another celebrity story. ...

None of this is guaranteed, of course. If the new Stewart is really a false image being marketed for broad consumption, consumers will figure that out soon enough. Selling sheets is easier than peddling false humility. In that case, Stewart's story will still be instructive, although the lemonade will be unappetizingly sour.

FEMA at center of a storm Sarasota (Fla.) Herald-Tribune

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's response to Florida's battering by four hurricanes last year may come under some much-needed congressional scrutiny.

U.S. Reps. Katherine Harris and Mark Foley have called for hearings to investigate how FEMA distributed relief aid. ... Foley, R-West Palm Beach, is irritated that FEMA

has taken so long to reimburse counties for hurricane cleanup expenses that the agency promised to cover.

A Senate investigation is also under way, with hearings expected.

Undoubtedly, a pressing topic for any hearings will also be the mess in Miami-Dade County, where FEMA paid \$30 million in damage claims to 10,000 people even though all of the hurricanes missed that area by at least 100 miles.

FEMA officials continue to defend those payments, despite that 14 of the recipients have been indicted on federal fraud charges.

FEMA has much to explain. ... Hurricane victims haven't gotten many answers from FEMA. Maybe Congress will.

Let cotton farmers iron it out The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, Tenn.

Congress has no choice other than to make significant changes in farm policy in the wake of the World Trade Organization's decision that crop payments and other federal aid to U.S. cotton farmers violate international trade agreements. ...

To avoid trade sanctions, cotton subsidies must be reduced. That will save American taxpayers millions of dollars, but it will change the lives of 25,000 U.S. cotton farmers.

Producers now face an uncertain future because of a 2003 complaint filed by Brazil that made a compelling case that U.S. government support of American growers has artificially driven down world prices and made it harder for other countries to compete.

Because of subsidies, according to the complaint, cotton produced in the United States for about 68 cents a pound is sold on the international market for as little as 30 cents a pound. The WTO essentially agreed. U.S. government subsidies are unfair to this country's competitors around the world, who are producing cotton for much less.

Consequently a transition is in store for cotton growers and the Mid-South economy. It will be a bumpy ride to an uncertain destination, but there seems to be no alternative except to make the trip.

Apathy about AIDS is fatal The Record, Hackensack, N.J.

An alarming statistic came out of a recent international AIDS conference: The HIV in-

fection rate among African-Americans has doubled. Blacks are now 10 times more likely than whites to be infected with HIV, up from five times as likely in the early 1990s.

The darkening face of AIDS has coincided with a rise in public apathy about the disease. You don't see as many celebrity events these days to raise money for AIDS research. ... But it probably would get more attention if HIV infected 1 out of 50 whites, not 1 out of 50 blacks.

To counter the public inattention, it's more crucial than ever that black leaders speak up. They must demand changes in health policy that could slow the scourge, and work harder to raise awareness in their community of the risks of infection. ...

Researchers at a recent AIDS conference said the doubling of the infection rate among blacks was due to such causes as drug addiction, poverty and inadequate health care. These aren't easy problems to fix.

But some actions that would help aren't so difficult — more widespread HIV testing, more drug treatment, more efforts to stem the infection among drug users.

Testing waters with oil plan The Gainesville (Fla.) Sun

For all the emphasis being placed in Washington, D.C., on drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one might think it is the single most important element in the Bush administration's proposed energy policy. Certainly, it is shaping up to be the most hotly debated energy issue in Congress.

But ... [I]f allowing oil companies to exploit the suspected oil reserves in that remote corner of the Alaskan wilderness is so central to America's future energy security, why do the oil companies appear so lukewarm about the plan?

The industry's seeming indifference may have to do with pessimistic or inconclusive evidence about just how much oil may be available for tapping in the refuge. By one government estimate, it's about 10 billion barrels of oil. At full production, that might yield one million barrels a day — about a percent of the nation's daily need.

So why the political enthusiasm for drilling when the industry doesn't seem to care? Well, one theory is that opening up the Arctic Refuge would make it politically easier to drill off the coasts of Florida and California later on. ...

So why should Floridians care about drilling in the Arctic? It's not like they want to start sinking wells off our golden beaches.



Sunday Horoscope

Mars in Capricorn sends aggressive energy into relationships.

Peaceful relationships that were slipping into a boring groove are invigorated. But relationships that were already agitated could reach an unpleasant level of intensity.

This is no time to be stubborn, but tell that to the Taurus moon. Utilize deep breathing to keep your cool.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(March 13) Your ever-evolving life is an inspiration to others. Put your message out there. The universe only knows to give to you if you are grateful for what you've received. Loving gestures are reciprocated, bringing comfort and healing. By June, you're ready for an adventure. Sagittarius and Capricorn are ideal partners for travel, business and love.

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

There are people who shine like beacons in your life. And then there are those who blend into the scenery, surprising you when they finally reach out—you almost forget you knew them. Honor those people now.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

Your sign rules the throat, and today, your verbal requests have even more weight than usual. You'll be surprised what mountains you can move using only the magic of your voice. Don't waste the gift of your small staff.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

As much as you'd enjoy an easy road, friendships are not without occasional strife. When you presume the other person is innocent (even though this seems highly unlikely to you now), a new insight leaps to the fore.

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

You'll assemble a team for your special project—or at the least you should! To take on the whole thing is nothing short of a Herculean effort. Stay motivated. Strongly consider other water signs (Scorpio and Pisces).

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

Nothing compares to the sweetness of family connections. You're absolutely

ly happiest when you're giving to your next of kin. Hint: The best you can give is a listening ear. Turn off the distractions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). So far, your reputation in a certain social group is perfectly preserved.

The stakes are raised, though, and it takes more to stay in good graces. Show your social savvy by thinking ahead.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

The matricorn of your family is happy, everyone is happy. If said matricorn is you, now's the time to spoil yourself silly. If not, an affectionate display aimed at "mama" will be uplifting to all.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

Your social set represents a patchwork of different styles, and you can learn something from each contributing person. So instead of worrying about fitting in, play up the differences between you and those around you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Exercise caution—even though it's not your thing. Let the deal go down without you if necessary. When you're not in a hurry, and you're willing to be thoughtful, you save time, money and energy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Hiding your skills is futile. The experts agree that you're one of them. This means you'll be asked to help, which is really more of a pleasure than an obligation. The more generous you are, the happier you'll be.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

Risk being unpopular. Liking something different from what the rest like, acting on your own initiative and adopting the lonely cause are all favored activities. You're a true independent.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

The music of the spheres is a grand experience, but the melody is a simple one, heard in the smallest details of nature—a leaf, the buzz of a bee, the lapping tide. Likewise, you communicate to the world in big and small ways.

Creators Syndicate

Names carry sounds of home

On a recent trip through New England, I noticed that many place names share certain elements, such as "ham" in "Eastham" and "Chatham," "mouth" in "Plymouth" and "Falmouth," and "wich" in "Norwich" and "Greenwich." Any light you can shed on the origins and meanings of these names would be appreciated.

As you probably realize, many of the places in New England were named by the first English settlers who crossed the Atlantic. To make the unfamiliar shores of their "new England" seem less foreign, the names they chose were often the names of familiar

places they had left behind.

The British places whose namesakes you mention acquired their names hundreds of years ago, when the English language was still in its earliest formative stages. As the language evolved around them, the place names remained essentially unchanged.

As a result, names whose meanings would have been perfectly intelligible and logical to those who chose them now require a little investigation for us to understand.

This column was prepared by the Editors of Merriam-Webster's Concise Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Readers may send questions to Merriam-Webster's Wordwatch, P.O. Box 261, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

He blames messenger of grandson's bad news

Dear Abby: My nephew was recently arrested. It's the fourth time I know of that he's been arrested for various things—there may have been more.

This time, bond was set at \$500. He asked his parents for the money.

They refused because they hoped the time he was spent in jail would teach him a lesson.

They called his grandparents (my parents). He told them he was in jail because his girlfriend (with whom he has two kids, 6 years old and 8 months old) had accused him of aggravated assault.

They dislike her, so they believed him.

I learned the real reason for his arrest when I called the jail. It wasn't assault; it was two counts of driving without a license, and two counts of failing to appear in court. When I apologized my mother about this, she got mad at me, and now she's not speaking to me. Was I right to let her know her grandson was trying to use her again, or do I owe her an apology?

—Heartbroken in Virginia

Dear Heartbroken: There's a saying that in ancient times it was dangerous to give Caesar bad news, because it was his

habit to kill the messenger. Your mother could not have been thrilled to hear what you had to say, so instead of aiming her anger where it belonged—at her grandson—she's taking it out on you. You don't owe your mother an apology; she owes you one.

Dear Abby:

I have been married for 18 years and have two children. I come from a humble background. My husband's family is very well-to-do. I try to be as nice to them as I can, but with my mother, sister and brother treat me like we don't exist.

If we are invited for a family get-together, they don't speak to either of us. If they have something to communicate, they talk around us.

How should I deal with this? They act as if we are not their family. It breaks my heart to see them be mean to my children. They seem to think that money is everything.

I think my husband's mother and sister may be the problem. I can't continue to let them walk all over me.

Please give me some insight.

Have no one to talk to.
—On The Outside In Independence, Kan.

Remain neutral when dealing in aftermath of sister's divorce

Dear Annie: I have a question about post-divorce relationships. My sister, "Karen," married my best friend, "Roy," but they divorced two years ago.

I once tried to mediate my relationship with Roy, but he has made it impossible to return my calls or acknowledge me, despite several efforts to reach out to him.

I come from a large family, and my wife and I were the first to know the divorce was coming. Both Roy and Karen

confided in us for nearly a year before their problems became common knowledge. For a long time, I deeply resented Roy for putting my sister through this misery. I made attempts at counseling before divorcing, but I think Roy was only putting up a front, and never really expected any reconciliation to occur.

Now I have a second sister who is divorcing, and I don't want to make the same mistake twice. Is there something I should do to mend fences with Roy, or should I just forget it?

—Troubled in Toronto

Dear Troubled: During a relative or friend's divorce, it is

best to remain as neutral as possible, offering support and encouragement.

Taking sides can only lead to trouble.

It's very likely Roy is aware that you blame him for the split, and this would not make him

feel comfortable renewing the friendship. He also may carry some guilt about the circumstances of the divorce, and becoming chummy again could bring back unsettling memories.

If you want to mend fences, send an e-mail or leave a phone message saying you'd like to be friends again when he's ready. Then let him make the next

move.

Dear Annie: My older sister, "Lauren," is very smart, well respected by her peers, and has an important government job. Neither of us is married. She does not live near me, so we get together only on special occasions.

Last year, Lauren was diagnosed with diabetes. I went to see her over the holidays and was shocked at her living conditions.

Dear On The Outside: It would have been helpful if you had been able to explain why your husband's family has been so cold and unwelcoming. Whatever the reason, if they have not accepted you after 18 years of marriage to your husband, it is not likely to happen now. For your own happiness, and that of your children, strictly limit or eliminate your visits with the in-laws. Once you stop seeking their approval, your life will improve.

Dear Abby: I am a

23-year-old graduate student who is working on my Ph.D. in genetics. My great-aunt and I are arguing over the use of "Dr." in the non-academic world.

I say that I'll be allowed to call myself "Dr. Jones" when I graduate. She disagrees, saying only MDs are allowed to call themselves "Doctor."

—Almost Dr. Jones

Dear Almost Doctor: Your aunt is well-meaning but misinformed. Once having earned your doctorate, you are entitled to be introduced as "Doctor" if you wish, and to be addressed as "Doctor" in formal situations.

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box #940, 100 N. Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19106. Write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.ueppress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

She has two cats and a dog. The house reeked of animal urine, and the litter boxes were overflowing. Dust bunnies were piled up, and there were stacks of dirty dishes in the sink. It was a pigsty.

This can't be good for a diabetic, and I worry that Lauren is going to make herself more ill. I said nothing at the time, because Lauren does not take criticism well, but later, I wrote her a letter with my concerns. I offered to clean her house or hire someone to do it, but she hasn't written back. Any advice?

—Love My Sister

Dear Sister: Not everyone is a good housekeeper, and you can't force Lauren to clean up if she isn't interested.

If you think her slovenliness may indicate that she is depressed about her recent diagnosis, mention that possibility, and see if she is receptive to counseling. Meanwhile, please stay as close as you can, in case she turns to you for help.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to annie@mailbox.comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creator's Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate



Dear Abby



Annie's Mailbox

RELIGION

'Leaving the Saints' over alleged sex abuse

Mormon church and author's siblings deny actions detailed in woman's memoir

By MARK THIESSEN

The Associated Press

A NEW MEMOIR DETAILING alleged child sexual abuse in a prominent Mormon home is being discredited by both the church and the author's siblings.

It's one thing for any Mormon woman to say in public that she had been sexually abused, but it was quite another for Martha Beck, whose roots with the church date back to the beginning: Her great-great-grandfather was the personal dentist for Joseph Smith, founder of what is now the nation's fifth-largest denomination.

The author of the best seller "Expecting Adam," the 42-year-old Beck also is the daughter of the late Brigham Young University professor emeritus of ancient scripture, Hugh Nibley. In his role as a Mormon apologist, he was one of the church's leading authorities and its fiercest defender against intellectual attacks. His



Dr. Martha Beck

prolific writings now number 15 volumes of collected works, and will likely reach 20 volumes.

Beck chronicles her difficult and dramatic break from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, her spiritual quest

and details confrontations she had with her father over the alleged abuse in "Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons and Found My Faith."

The majority of the book details her falling out with the Mormon faith and criticizes church authorities for stifling dissent and independent thought among Mormon scholars who didn't adhere to church orthodoxy.

"Not since I'd studied Chinese, using textbooks written by the Communists, had I run into more careful censoring, more suspicious questions, more timid conversations between people who hoped they might actually be true friends," she writes.

But the book is drawing attention mostly because of the claims Beck makes about her father.

Nibley died at age 94 on Feb. 24, but Beck and other family members said he adamantly denied the allegations of sexual abuse and vaginal scarring that Beck claims she endured.

She began recovering the mem-

ories, she says, in 1990, two days after a near-death experience during surgery to repair a spontaneous tear that had opened inside scarring in her vagina.

While she was anesthetized during surgery, she said she encountered a "Being of Light."

Two days later, she said she had her first remembrance of the alleged abuse: She says she remembers being stretched out and legs spread like a frog on a dissection table. "My father is doing something that feels as though it's ripping me in two," she writes in the book.

"Everything Martha has said is absolutely false," she quotes her father as saying. "To think she would even claim such a thing is shocking. I would never defile my own child."

Her seven siblings discounted the book in a written statement last month.

"Martha's most egregious accusation—that our father molested her over several years and that the family covered up the crime—is not true. While salacious ac-

cusations sell books, the reader should know that in this case it simply did not happen."

These allegations of dissonant real abuse survivors who lose credibility and suffer increased anguish when false accusations are exposed," the family statement says.

"Recovered memory" refers to instances in which psychologists say the memory of a painful experience is suppressed in an effort to ease discomfort associated with that experience, only to re-surface years later.

The Mormon church also has denounced the book as "seriously flawed" in the way it depicts the church, its members and teachings.

"Fair-minded readers will find it most at best unconvincing, at worst mean-spirited and at times absurd," said church spokesman Dale Bateman.

Beck said the abuse she remembered wasn't about lust. "It wasn't even about sex, except as a form of torture or even symbolic death," Beck wrote. "No, it was all about religion."

For whom the bells toll

... Definitely not for Fla. monastery's neighbors

By TERRY ROEN

The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel

GLENWOOD, Fla. — June Kasperek works the graveyard shift and wakes every morning to the loud clanging of bells.

The nurse goes to bed at 6 a.m. after working a 12-hour shift at Florida Hospital DeLand. The tolling begins two hours later.

June and Ross Kasperek, who live across the street from the Mother of Good Shepherd Monastery, said the bells toll anywhere from 30 to 150 times for up to seven minutes several times a day.

"Nobody needs to ring their bells that loud. Anyone could get the message after five dings. It's obnoxious," said Ross Kasperek, 69.

The Kaspereks and several of their neighbors complain the bells have ruined their quiet country lifestyle in this unincorporated community west of DeLand. Church bells are exempt from the county's noise ordinance.

Some people also are angry that the county allowed the monastery to be located in a residential neighborhood.

The Mother of Good Shepherd monastery is home to three monks, including Father Seamus, who says they have the right to ring their bells whenever they please. He attributes the complaints to "a few cranky neighbors" and said most of the people who live around them welcome the monastery.

"When you try to do God's work, there are always problems," said Father Seamus, an ordained priest who, like the other monks at the monastery, does not use his last name. "There's a war going on and people are dying of cancer. Why are bells such a problem?"

Father Seamus, the superior of the monastery, said the bells are a call to prayer and an important part of their monastic routine. The monks lead a contem-

plative life of prayer and meditation, chanting prayers seven times a day beginning at 4 a.m.

Mounted on metal frames, the two bells — the largest is four pounds — are rung with pulleys four to five times a day, Father Seamus said. After some neighbors complained about the noise, the monks used a crane to move the bells away from neighboring homes.

In another concession to the neighborhood, the bells are not rung until 8 a.m. to announce daily Mass and 9 a.m. for Sunday Mass, Father Seamus said.

Katrina Starling, who lives nearby, said the bells are "very tranquil" and remind her to take a moment of silence to pray.

Frank Burns, who lives behind the monastery, said the bells are "reminiscent of the old days."

The controversy started in January 2004 when the monks moved their monastery from Peaks Island, Maine, to Mercers Ferry Road. They rented the 11-acre tract for four months until they bought the property and a three-bedroom cinder block home in April for \$350,000, according to Volusia property records.

Roger Purcell, who lives behind the monastery on Sunset Court, said he called the monastery and asked that they ring the bells less often or dampen the sound since the noise wakes him in the morning.

"The guy was cocky on the phone and told me they can ring the bells whenever they want," said Purcell, 57.

The monks said they are not willing to tone down the rings or ring the bells less often. They said they have already tried to be good neighbors and vow to stay. They plan to expand and build a new chapel, monastery and retreat house.

"The bells are in compliance and we've already compromised by ringing the bells later," Father Seamus said.



ORLANDO SENTINEL/RET

Brother Joachim is one of three Augustinian monks at Mother of the Good Shepherd Monastery in Glenwood, Fla. Some neighbor say the monks, who live a contemplative lifestyle, are disturbing the quiet when they ring their bells every day for Mass.

Churches win big in grab for mini radio

San Francisco Chronicle

Community activists cheered when the federal government began offering licenses for low-power radio stations five years ago. But now, some are wondering what happened to what they envisioned as an end-around to big media domination of the airwaves.

After years of fighting legal battles for left-leaning "pirate" broadcasters, advocates pictured a sea of under-100-watt stations where low-income folks and communities of color — "new voices" in government parlance — could grab a tiny slice of a radio dial now dominated by conglomerates.

But something unexpected happened on the way to the dial diversity the left thought it was getting: Low-power frequencies have been gobbled up by Christian organizations. Church groups make up roughly half the 344 applicants licensed by the Federal Communications Commission for stations with a broadcasting range of about five miles.

And with precious few vacant frequencies available in big cities, most of the low-power stations have popped up in far-flung suburbs and small towns — far from the greatest concentration of communities of color.

YOUR MONEY

Preparing pocketbooks for retirement

Before calling it quits, troops should consider financial hit

BY RICK EMERT

Stars and Stripes

While retiring from the military means no more boot shining or deployments downrange, it does not necessarily mean that it's time to get a condo in Florida and sit on the beach all day.

Servicemembers — enlisted and officers — will draw roughly half of their base pay when they retire, meaning they have many things to consider before deciding to hang up the uniform. Have they lined up a job in the civilian sector? Should they buy a home? Have they saved enough money?



Primus

A sergeant first class with 20 years' service would see his monthly pay change from \$3,538.70 to \$1,729.35 once he retires. For a staff sergeant, the pay would drop from \$2,908.20 to \$1,454.10.

That's not enough to really retire, said Staff Sgt. Lawrence Primus, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery in Bamberg, Germany, who is planning to retire after his son graduates high school in June.

"I would be immediate to stop working," he said. "You figure your pay gets cut in half. All of a sudden, I'll be making \$1,500 a month. We can't live on that."

In addition to the base pay, servicemembers also get a cost-of-living allowance, extra

money for meals and a housing allowance if they live off post.

When a servicemember retires, all of those extras go away, said Sylvester Kimbrough, a military pay technician who focuses on retirement pay at Warner Barracks in Bamberg.

Primus and one of his co-workers who is also retiring, Sgt. 1st Class Philip Tomey, said they are hoping to find a job where the work and pay are similar to their status in the Army.

"That's a scary part of retiring: what am I going to do next?" asked Tomey, who plans to retire in November. "I know McDonald's and Wal-Mart are always hiring, but I want a job where the position and pay are comparable to my position in the Army."

To prepare for the transition to the civilian sector, both soldiers said they have been putting away money for years. Primus said he has spent the past several years preparing, and he bought a house near Fort Bragg, N.C., a few years ago. Tomey said he has saved about \$10,000.

"The Army pays for most of the moving and the lodging when you relocate after retiring, but there are going to be expenses no matter what," Tomey said. "I wanted to make sure we would have that covered. If we

Separation can be 'a scary time'

Retiring soldiers may find the jump from the Army world to the civilian business sector a little daunting.

"It is a scary time for someone who has spent all of his adult life in the military," said Mary Kaldseich, job assistance counselor for the Army Career and Alumni Program in Wiesbaden, Germany.

The program can help with writing a résumé, preparing for job interviews and even tracking down jobs, Kaldseich said.

"We try to help them take a look inward and see how they are going to approach a nonmilitary lifestyle," she said. "They have to demilitarize themselves and their résumés."

Many soldiers "don't think they have any skills, but the skills they possess from being in the military are really sought after by employers," she said.

That's not to say that prospective employers are waiting for newly retired soldiers just outside the gate, she warned.

"On average, it takes about six to nine months to find a job," Kaldseich said. "Retiring soldiers can start coming to ACAP two years before they retire. It's important to get the word out to commanders to let the soldiers start coming here as soon as possible. The thought of a soldier only getting a couple of months to find a job scares me."

Not to mention that the average retiring soldier

is about 40. But Sgt. 1st Class Philip Tomey, of the 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery in Bamberg, Germany, said the age factor doesn't concern him.

"I don't think of it as being older than the competition, but being more experienced," Tomey said. "I'm a mechanic. I've been looking around and there are a lot of opportunities out there for me."

But Tomey, who is planning to retire in November, said he can't try to lock down a job until he has retirement orders with a definite date of when he would be available to start work.

That, too, can be difficult with the always-looming threat of stop loss, which prevents servicemembers from leaving the service when their time is up. Tomey said he was planning to retire late last year when his plans were changed because of stop loss.

"I didn't think it was right," said Staff Sgt. Lawrence Primus, who is planning to retire in June. "When a soldier gets to that point, it makes him change his whole plans. We arranged for the tenants to be out of our house on a certain date, so we've had to suck up that cost for a year."

"You get yourself ready and get your family ready, and then the Army prevents you from going through with it," Tomey said. "It can be really stressful."

— Rick Emert

have some of that money left over, that's great."

There are many ways to save, but the key is to start early, said Andria Nichols, financial readiness planner with Army Community Service in Bamberg. She recommends that soldiers start saving at least five years before retirement.

"There are so many ways to save money," Nichols said. "The first thing is to track your expenditures. I think a lot of people would be surprised at how much money they spend in a day or

week. Buying lunch every day can be very expensive. If you pack a lunch for work, put that money you would have spent into savings. Try to put 10 percent of your pay into savings."

Hanging up the uniform doesn't come without stress, Nichols said.

"So much hits all at once, you have to worry about life insurance, buying a home and your pay being cut in half," Nichols said. "There is so much more to consider, things you may not have had to pay in the Army, like

utilities bill. The reality of it all can be overwhelming."

While retirement will be an extreme life change, Tomey said he's ready.

"My career has taken me to the ultimate level," he said. "I've led soldiers into battle in the Persian Gulf and in Operation Iraqi Freedom."

"I've accomplished what I wanted to accomplish in my military career. Now I'm ready to move on to the civilian world."

E-mail Rick Emert at: emert@starsandstripes.osd.mil

Study: Personal finance not part of most states' school curricula

BY BEN FELLER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More states are requiring students to learn about managing money, but personal finance remains a fringe topic in schools and a major source of federal concern.

Seven states mandate that students take a course about basic finances to graduate high school, according to 2004 survey results released Thursday by the private National Council on Economic Education. That's up from 2002, when just four states required such courses.

In the standards they set for schools, most states say they want money matters to be taught — 38 states include the ideas of saving, investing, risk management and other finance themes in their standards or guidelines, an increase from 31 states two years earlier. But the survey found many states don't enforce the standards, let alone require entire courses.

"There is more good economic and financial education being offered in schools than ever," said Robert Duvall, president of the national council, which released its findings during an economic literacy summit. "But as a subject area, it continues to be

marginalized as an add-on in an already crowded curriculum. We need to keep pushing to make it part of the core."

Poor understanding of personal finance can cause more than a sloppy checkbook. As young people rack up credit debt or fail to save money, they can later find themselves with bankruptcies, home foreclosures and financial stresses that divide families, experts say.

The problem of bad money management is drawing more national attention as a public education issue. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has prodded schools to help teach kids financial literacy so they are not saddled by poor financial decisions as adults.

The Financial Literacy and Education Commission, which represents 20 federal agencies and commissions, is working on ways to help people navigate complex money decisions.

In a national survey last year, only 52 percent of high school seniors answered correctly questions about personal finance and economics. The students struggled, for example, with questions on income tax, stocks and bonds, credit card liability and retirement plans.

SEE MONEY ON PAGE 33



Math teacher Curt Hallaway instructs ninth-graders Crystal Haberstrof, left, and Jessica Plummer at Border Central School in Calvin, N.D., on Feb. 3. Like all but seven states, North Dakota does not require students to take a personal finance course to graduate high school.

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Lawyer says Canseco's request for immunity being considered

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jose Canseco's request for immunity when he testifies before a congressional hearing on steroids next week is being considered by the Justice Department, according to the former AL MVP's lawyer.

Robert Saunooke, who represents Canseco, said he spoke Friday at length with a staff lawyer of the House Government Reform Committee about the immunity request. Saunooke said Canseco would be able to answer more questions if he is given immunity for the March 17 hearing.

"It's with the Justice Department," Saunooke said. "The committee is considering our request and has not ruled out granting immunity to Jose, but it is required to inform and get input from the Justice Department prior to ruling on the request."

David Marin, a spokesman for committee chairman Rep. Tom Davis, said in an e-mail that as of Friday night, the committee was not planning to offer immunity.

Two Democrats on the panel supported immunity. If Canseco's request is denied, Saunooke intends to ask the committee to close the session to the public and media.

Rob Manfred, an executive vice president in the baseball commissioner's office, was in Washington on Friday to meet with the committee. Manfred is among the officials subpoenaed to testify. The commissioner's office has vowed to fight the subpoenas.

Boston pitcher Curt Schilling, an outspoken opponent of steroids, said Friday he was willing to testify. Frank Thomas of the Chicago White Sox also said he planned to attend, although there was a chance he could testify by telephone due to his injured ankle, which he said would swell if he travels by plane.

Mark McGwire, Jason Giambi, Sammy Sosa and Rafael Palmeiro haven't said whether they'll show up in Washington. Davis, a Virginia Republican, has threatened the subpoenaed witnesses with contempt of Congress if they don't testify.

And what of Barry Bonds, who hasn't been summoned by the committee leadership? "I would like to see Bonds testify. Give him immunity, too," said Rep. Edolphus Towns, a New York Democrat on the committee.

"I'm disappointed that he's not been asked to come. I'll be honest with you. I'll even go a step further: I wouldn't have a problem with all of them having immunity. Our role is to get information, and if we can get all we can get, we can use it to clean up the game."

Towns plans to ask the witnesses whether they used steroids.

We need to ask that," he said. "We need to know."

If a witness is offered immunity, testifies and later is charged with a crime, prosecutors would have to prove statements before Congress were not used as evidence.

Rep. Dennis Kucinich, an Ohio Democrat on the committee, also supported immunity.

"If we want people to testify, we cannot expect they're going to put their personal freedom on the line, at least if we want to get any answers," he said.



Boston Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling, who is recovering from ankle surgery, threw 48 pitches on Friday but will likely miss the opener.

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Red Sox's Schilling likely to miss opener

The Associated Press

Curt Schilling vs. Randy Johnson on opening night might not come off as planned.

The Boston Red Sox ace threw to baters Friday for the first time since winning Game 2 of the World Series against St. Louis. Recovering from right ankle surgery on Nov. 9, Schilling said he's unlikely to pitch against the New York Yankees and his former Arizona teammate on April 3 in New York.

The flu that left Schilling bed-ridden earlier this week set back his rehabilitation timetable.

"The math right now doesn't add up very well," Schilling said in Fort Myers, Fla. "I'd like to think it's important for me to get back ... but that doesn't change the timetable."

If Schilling is unable to pitch on Opening Day, former Yankee David Wells likely would start.

With pitching coach Dave Wallace and trainer Chris Correnti looking on, Schilling threw about 50 pitches from the stretch.

"I'm frustrated because nothing's working on my pace," Schilling said. "But I'm also understanding of the fact that I can't make it different than what it is right now."

At Peoria, Ariz., the Seattle Mariners said closer Eddie Guardado could be sidelined for

Spring training

up to three weeks after straining his right hamstring.

"They think that he's going to be OK and there are, hopefully, things we can do to shorten the time period," manager Mike Hargrove said.

J.J. Putz is considered the top candidate to take over as Seattle's closer if Guardado can't pitch by April 4, when the Mariners open against Minnesota. Putz, a converted starter who has been relieving for two seasons, had nine saves in 13 chances while Guardado was hurt last year.

"Obviously, J.J. has closing experience so he's a consideration," Hargrove said. "He's a big, strong guy and throws the ball hard and throws strikes."

At Kissimmee, Fla., the Houston Astros said Roy Oswalt will start their season opener for the third straight season.

Astros manager Phil Garner said he decided to stick with last year's rotation because he liked having left-hander Andy Pettitte between Oswalt and right-hander Roger Clemens.

Oswalt struggled in his second spring start, allowing five hits and three walks in an 8-7 victory over Atlanta. Jason Lane homered twice and drove in five runs.

Syracuse to face an unlikely finalist

West Virginia surprises Villanova

BY IRA PODELL
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mike Gansey's wild knee layup in the first half looked like a lock to be his craziest shot of the night.

That was way before the West Virginia forward was under the basket with less than a second left.

Gansey got fouled as he tried to put in a game-winning layup, then made two free throws with 2 seconds remaining Friday night to give West Virginia a stunning 78-76 victory over No. 19 Villanova in the semifinals of the Big East tournament.

The Mountaineers (21-9) will face Syracuse on Saturday in an unlikely championship game. West Virginia is the first No. 8 seed to play for the Big East title and will be making its first appearance in the final.

"I would have never imagined this coming into this tournament," Gansey said. "We were trying to hopefully win a game or two to get into the NCAA tournament."

Mission accomplished. No team has won four straight days to capture the Big East crown, but West Virginia will have a chance to do it against the 16th-ranked Orange (26-6).

"The way we've been playing, our team chemistry, we played probably the best we ever have all year," Gansey said. "It's just

unbelievable."

Syracuse, the third seed, reached the title game Friday by holding on for a 67-63 victory over No. 12 Connecticut in a matchup of the next two NCAA champions.

Connecticut (22-7) had won 10 straight conference games and even as the second seed was considered the tournament favorite. Instead, Syracuse will make its first appearance in a Big East final since losing to UConn in 1998.

"It seemed for a long time there we got to the finals every year," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said. "I think we took it for granted. It has been a while, but it's nice to be there."

The Orange used some impressive defense to take a 32-19 half-time lead and they twice led by 21 points, the last time at 48-27 on a dunk by Hakim Warrick with 12:47 to play.

"Our defense was tremendous tonight," Boeheim said. "We did a great job on the boards."

Warrick had 26 points and 10 rebounds while Gerry McNamara added had 15 points for the Orange, trying to win their fourth championship — first since 1992.

Charlie Villanueva had 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Huskies, who had played in the past three tournament title games. In the first half against Villanova (22-7), it didn't look like it was going to be another special night for the Mountaineers.

After falling behind 23-13 about 9 minutes in, West Virginia



Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim, who has won three Big East tournament titles, advanced to the championship game for the first time since 1998.

began connecting from long range against the conference's best defenders beyond the arc.

The Mountaineers made five three pointers during a 29-8 run that gave them a lead they didn't relinquish until Villanova went ahead 74-73 with 30.7 seconds remaining.

Randy Foye, who led Villanova with 22 points, scored in the lane with 10 seconds to play to tie the game at 76. West Virginia didn't call a timeout and Patrick Bellein — the coach's son — let fly from the right side with about 4 seconds left. Gansey grabbed the loose ball, went up and hit the bottom of the backboard. The ball came right back to him and he was fouled by Allan Ray.

"I just went up for a layup and they called a foul. I was like 'Oh my gosh.' I looked up at the clock and it was 2 and I thought I can't believe I'm in this situation," said Gansey, who finished with a career-high 22 points and 10 rebounds.

Iowa slays Mich. St.

BY NANCY ARMOUR
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Some day, after the season ends, Iowa coach Steve Alford is going to get a call from Wisconsin's Bo Ryan.

"They'll exchange pleasantries, talk about how the summer's going, see how each other's family is doing. And then Ryan is going to pick Alford's brain."

"Steve's got something about this tournament," Ryan said after No. 23 Wisconsin beat Ohio State 60-49 Friday night to advance to the semifinals of the Big Ten tournament, setting up a matchup against Iowa. "He knows something about this tournament."

Four years after the Hawkeyes won four games in four days to capture the Big Ten title, they're at it again. The scrappy bunch held off No. 13 Michigan State, thanks to some rare shooting from the foul line by Alan Anderson and a clutch rebound from tire reserve Jack Brownlee.

Anderson missed two free throws with 7 seconds left, and the 6-foot Brownlee came up with the rebound in the scrum. He made one of two free throws, and Jeff Horner stole the inbound pass to seal the 71-69 upset.

In other games, top-ranked Illinois rebounded from its first loss of the year with a 60-49 rout of Northwestern, and Minnesota beat Iowa 71-53 to keep its NCAA tournament hopes alive.

Big Ten

Illinois (30-1) will play Minnesota (21-9) in a semifinal Saturday, and it is sure to be an emotional game for Illini coach Bruce Weber. Weber's mother, Dawn, died Friday night after surgery to repair a torn aorta. The 81-year-old widow was taken to the hospital after complaining of chest pains when she arrived at the United Center.

Iowa (21-9) won its fifth straight, rallying after leading scorer Pierre Pierce was kicked off the team for legal troubles.

The loss was only the third in the past 15 games for the Spartans (22-6), whose seniors will leave without winning any Big Ten titles, regular season or tournament. The Spartans won four Big Ten titles from 1998-01.

As the Iowa players rushed the court after the final buzzer, the Spartans looked dazed, knowing they'd let the game slip from their fingers. Michigan State, which came into the game as the best foul-shooting team in the nation, was just 13 of 30 from the line.

Anderson, a 90-percent free throw shooter, was five of 10.

Minnesota's win was critical. The Golden State Spartans (15-13) were both off for NCAA bids. But it wasn't much of a contest as Minnesota handed the Hoosiers their worst in the Big Ten tournament.

Top seeds roll to semis

BY DOUG TUCKER
The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The favorites prevailed on the second day of the Big 12 tournament.

After two upsets in the first round, the higher seeds advanced in Friday's quarterfinal games.

It was a close call for third-seeded Oklahoma State, though. The 10th-ranked Cowboys led 11th-seeded Colorado by 10 points with six minutes left in the last game of the night, then held off a frantic rally for an 87-85 victory.

"It was a barn-burner at the end," said Joey Graham, who led the Cowboys with 24 points and hit two free throws with 7.8 seconds left. "They came out and hit a lot of good shots on us."

Richard Roby led Colorado (14-16), the only No. 11 seed to make the quarterfinals in the tournament's nine-year history, with 21 points. He couldn't take the last shot, though, because he had fouled out in the closing seconds.

Instead, after Graham and Ivan McFarlin tangled while going for a defensive rebound and were called for traveling, Marcus Hall's last-second three-point try for Colorado bounced off the rim.

Oklahoma State, the defending tournament champion, will face No. 9 Kansas in Saturday's semifinals. Kansas Tech will meet top-seeded Oklahoma in the other semifinal.

Texas Tech beat Iowa State 64-56, and No. 17 Oklahoma won its seventh straight with an 83-79 victory over Missouri.

Kansas got to the semifinals via

an old, familiar route — with a victory over frustrated Kansas State. With Wayne Simien scoring 28 points and collecting 14 rebounds, the Jayhawks beat the Wildcats for the 31st consecutive time, 80-67.

Wildcats fans had hoped the end of the streak could be at hand since the Jayhawks (25-5) had lost four of six and were without guard Keith Langford, who has an ankle injury and a stomach flu.

Instead, it was the same old story for the Wildcats (17-12), who have not beaten Kansas since January 1994. It's the most lopsided span ever in a spirited state rivalry that began in 1907.

"We didn't think they were vulnerable at all," Kansas State senior Jeremiah Massey said. "They're one of the best teams in the country and we knew they were going to come out and fight."

The top-seeded Sooners (24-6) got 18 points, seven assists and two steals from Terrill Everett, who has keyed their winning streak.

Missouri (16-16) hit a tournament record 33 of 36 free throws and tied the school record with 23 in a row. Linas Kleiza had a career-high 33 points for the Tigers. Jarriss Jackson, who had 30 points, converted three last-minute turnovers into six free throws to seal Texas Tech's victory over Iowa State (18-11). The fourth-seeded Red Raiders (19-9) advanced to the semifinals for the fourth straight year.

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Wildcats, Huskies battle for crown

BY BETH HARRIS
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Arizona and Washington are similar in many ways, except for how each team got to the Pac-10 tournament final.

The No. 8 Wildcats won their two games by a combined 56 points. The 14th-ranked Huskies earned two victories by a total of eight. They'll meet in Saturday's championship game at Staples Center, with the winner earning the conference's automatic NCAA bid. The runner-up is assured of a spot in the NCAA's, too.

"I know Arizona has a team that has been at the top or near the top of this conference for a long, long while," Washington coach Lorenzo Roman said. "You aspire to be the best. We've had some good battles in the last few years."

The top-seeded Wildcats (27-5) cruised past fifth-seeded Oregon State 90-59 in Friday's semifinals. The second-seeded Huskies (26-5), who have won six of their past seven games, defeated third-seeded Stanford 66-63.

Arizona had five players in double figures and used a 12-0 run at the start of the second half to blow out the Beavers (17-14) and advance to its fifth final appearance in eight years.

"I was hoping we'd get an opportunity to play three games because I thought it would get us ready for next week," said coach Lute Olson, who believes



Arizona's Channing Frye has made 89.5 percent of his field goal attempts in two tournament games.

Arizona has a chance to get a No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament. "We'll try to get the Pony Express going to get the word out East that we played well."

Channing Frye led the Wildcats with 17 points. The senior has shot 89.5 percent in two tournament games. Arizona has a record four Pac-10 tournament titles and its 15-3 tourney record is the league's best. The Wildcats' 31-point winning margin set a tournament record, breaking its own mark of 26 points against Oregon State in the 1988 title game.

Bobby Jones scored 12 of his 14 points in the second half and Nate Robinson added 14 points for the Huskies against Stanford.

The Cardinal (18-12) beat Washington last Saturday, spoiling the Huskies' bid to earn a share of the regular-season title for the first time in 20 years.

"We knew they took something from us by last week," Jones said. "We can make up for it by winning the championship."

St. Joseph's, GW to face off in final

The Associated Press

Atlantic 10

CINCINNATI — Pat Carroll scored a career-high 30 points Friday night, including a decisive three-point play with a minute left, and Saint Joseph's held off Xavier 73-68 to advance to the Atlantic-10 tournament title game.

The top-seeded Hawks (19-10) relied on the conference's co-Player of the Year to keep them in the running for their first tournament championship since 1997. Carroll had 20 points in the first half and made seven of 11 shots from behind the three-point arc.

Carroll's left-handed shot from the right corner with a minute to go ended a comeback by Xavier (17-12), which cut a nine-point deficit to 64-63 with 1:28 remaining. Both defenses had trouble keeping up in a furious first half — six ties, six lead changes. Center Will Caudle steadied Xavier inside, scoring 12 points of his 14 points.

Dedrick Finn's three-point — his first basket after seven misses — cut the Hawks' lead 61-58 with

4:26 left, leaving the outcome in Carroll's hands. He shot an air ball on a three-point play with 1:57 to go, and Josh Dunks' free throw got Xavier within 64-63. Carroll then hit the three from the right corner.

George Washington 77, Temple 58: J.R. Pinnoch scored 16 points to lead the Colonials (21-7) into the title game, which it lost in 1991 and 1998.

The Colonials' 15-1 run midway through the second half doomed Temple (16-13), which now must deal with the fallout of Hall of Fame coach John Chaney's tactics. Temple coach was suspended for ordering Nehemiah Ingram — a reserve he called "a goat" — to get rough in a Feb. 22 game against Saint Joseph's. Ingram had a vicious foul on Saint Joseph's senior forward John Bryant that broke his arm.

Mark Tyndley led Temple with 15 points. Matt Collins, the Owls' leading scorer at 18 points per game, finished with only six.

Conference tournaments

America East

Championship
Saturday
Vermont 80, Northeastern 57

Atlantic Coast

Friday
North Carolina 88, Clemson 81
Georgia Tech 73, Virginia Tech 54
State State 65, Wake Forest 55
Duke 76, Virginia 64

Saturday
North Carolina vs. Georgia Tech
N.C. State vs. Duke
Championship

Atlantic 10

Friday
Saint Joseph's 73, Xavier 68
George Washington 77, Temple 58
Championship
Saturday
Saint Joseph's vs. George Washington

Big East

Friday
West Virginia 78, Villanova 76
Syracuse 67, Connecticut 63
Championship
Saturday
West Virginia vs. Syracuse

Big Ten

Friday
Illinois 68, Northwestern 51
Michigan 71, Indiana 50
Wisconsin 71, Michigan State 49
Iowa 60, Ohio State 49

Saturday
Illinois vs. Minnesota
Iowa vs. Wisconsin
Championship

Big 12

Friday
Oklahoma 83, Missouri 79
Texas Tech 64, Iowa State 56
Kansas 80, Kansas State 67
Oklahoma State 87, Colorado 85
Saturday
Oklahoma vs. Texas Tech
Kansas vs. Oklahoma State
Championship

Big West

Friday
Pacific 63, Cal State Northridge 61
Utah State 84, Cal State Fullerton 77
Championship
Saturday
Pacific vs. Utah State

Conference USA

Friday
Louisville 74, Alabama-Birmingham 64
Memphis 81, South Florida 78
Championship
Saturday
Louisville 75, Memphis 74

Mid-American

Friday
Ohio 63, Miami (Ohio) 55
Buffalo 75, Western Michigan 68
Championship
Saturday
Ohio vs. Buffalo

Mid-Eastern Athletic

Friday
Delaware 51, South Carolina 51
Hampton 62, Coppin State 48
Championship
Saturday
Delaware State 53, Hampton 53

Mountain West

Friday
Utah 73, UNLV 67
New Mexico 77, San Diego State 37
Championship
Saturday
Utah vs. New Mexico

Pacific-10

Friday
Arizona 90, Oregon State 59
Washington 68, Stanford 63
Championship
Saturday
Arizona vs. Washington

Patriot League

Championship
Friday
Bucknell 61, Holy Cross 57

Southeastern

Friday
Alabama 68, Mississippi 52
Florida 80, Mississippi State 64
Kentucky 76, Tennessee 52
LSU 89, Auburn 58
Saturday
Florida 68, Alabama 62
Kentucky vs. LSU
Sunday
Florida vs. Kentucky/LSU

Southeastern

Championship
Saturday
SE Louisiana at Northwestern State

Southwestern Athletic

Friday
Alabama State 54, Southern U. 50
Alabama A&M 84, Jackson State 65
Championship
Saturday
Alabama State vs. Alabama A&M

Western Athletic

Friday
Boise State 85, Rice 77
Texas State 86, Fresno State 85
Championship
Saturday
Texas State vs. Boise State

Vermont, Bucknell win titles

The Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Taylor Coppentrass scored 37 points Saturday to lead Vermont to an 80-57 victory over Northeastern in its third straight America East Conference title and NCAA tournament berth.

Vermont held Northeastern star Jose Juan Barea to 14 points before he left early in the second half with an ankle injury.

Vermont, which led 48-34 at halftime, shot 54 percent from the floor and 41 percent from three-point range. Northeastern, which has won the conference tournament a league-best seven times, shot 33 percent.

Mid-Eastern Athletic

Delaware State 55, Hampton 53: At Richmond, Va., Aaron Williams made a 10-foot shot with 2 seconds left in the title game to boost the Hornets (19-13) to their first NCAA tournament berth.

The Hornets trailed for most of the game, but Jahshia Blumitt's three-pointers tied it 53-53 with 1:06 left, and Williams collected a loose ball and swished his shot to cap the comeback against Hampton (17-13).

On Friday:

Patriot League

Bucknell 61, Holy Cross 57: At Worcester, Mass., Kevin Bettencourt made two free throws with seconds left as Bucknell (22-9) held on to beat regular-season champion Holy Cross (24-6) in the tournament final after blowing most of a 20-point lead.

Bucknell led 53-13 in the first half but Holy Cross closed to 59-57 with 58 seconds left.

Holy Cross' Kevin Heilman missed a key shot, and Bettencourt was fouled on the rebound. The Bison will make their first

Conference tourneys

appearance in the NCAA tournament since 1989.

Big West

No. 18 Pacific 63, CS Northridge 61: At Anaheim, Calif., Tyler Newton made two free throws with 22 seconds left, and Guillaume Yango had 15 points and eight rebounds to help the top-seeded Tigers (26-2) win their 22nd straight game — the longest streak in the nation — and extend their Big West winning streak to 34 games.

The fourth-seeded Matadors (17-13) overcame a 12-point deficit in the second half and led 61-60 with a minute to play.

Utah St. 84, Cal St.-Fullerton 77: Nate Harris and Cass Mathews each scored 21 points to lead the second-seeded Aggies (23-7) over the third-seeded Titans (19-10).

Western Athletic

UTEP 85, Rice 77: At Reno, Nev., Omar Thomas scored 29 of his 31 points in the second half, and Giovanni St. Amant added 15 points on five three-pointers for the second-seeded Miners (26-7), who won their third straight game. Michael Harris scored 19 points for third-seeded Rice (19-11), which had won six in a row and led by four with less than 12 minutes left.

Boise St. 86, Fresno St. 85: Jason Ellis scored 25 points and Coby Karl made two game-winning free throws with 8.7 seconds left as the eighth-seeded Broncos (16-17) continued their improbable run. JaVance Humphrey scored 19 points for the Bulldogs (16-14).

Mountain West

No. 15 Utah 73, UNLV 67: At Denver, Andrew Bogut had 25 points and 12 rebounds, and defending tournament champion Utah made its first appearance in a semifinal game. Utah (27-4) held UNLV (16-13) to two points during a 7-minute span to 80 up by 14-4 in the first half. Bogut opened the second with a 10-2 run that made it 42-20.

New Mexico 77, San Diego St. 67: Manny Granger had 22 points and 14 rebounds to lift the Lobos (25-5), whose schedule strength is ranked 29th. Marcus Slaughter (23 points) and Brandon Heath (22 points) had their second straight brilliant games for the sixth-seeded Aztecs (11-18).

Mid-American

Buffalo 75, W. Michigan 68: At Cleveland, Yassin Ididhi scored 17 points to lead the seventh-seeded Bulls (22-8) into the conference championship game for the first time. Buffalo became a Division I school in 1991. Third-seeded Western Michigan (19-12) failed in its attempt to become the first repeat champion since Kent State in 2002.

Ohio 63, Miami (Ohio) 56: Sonny Troutman scored 19 points and made three three-pointers in the second half to help the fourth-seeded Bobcats (20-10) reach the title game for the first time since 1994. Nathan Peavy scored 15 points for Miami (19-10).

Southwestern Athletic

Alabama St. 54, Southern U. 50: At Birmingham, Ala., Kevin Spicer had 14 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Hornets (15-14) continued their improbable run into the title game against Alabama A&M (17-13).

So close, so far away

Missed free throws cost Memphis

BY TERESA M. WALKER
The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Memphis freshman Darius Washington missed two of three free throws with no time left on the clock, allowing No. 6 Louisville to escape with a 75-74 victory and the Conference USA championship on Saturday.

Louisville's Brad Gianiny hit one of two free throws with 6.7 seconds to give Louisville a two-point lead.

Memphis hustled downcourt and the ball went to Washington, who dribbled toward the top of the key for a shot. He was fouled by Louisville's Francisco Garcia as he threw up a shot, drawing three free throws.

He hit the first, but then missed the next two 20 seconds. After missing the last one, which would have forced overtime, he dropped to his knees and pulled his jersey over his head. He then collapsed on the floor as his teammates ran to console him.

Meanwhile, Louisville players celebrated an unlikely victory and the Cardinals' first sweep of the Conference USA regular-season and tournament titles in the school's last outing as a league member. Louisville moves to the Big East next season.

Louisville (29-4), which won its second C-USA tournament title in three years, heads into the NCAA tournament riding a nine-game

winning streak, its longest winning streak of the season. The Cardinals have won 18 of their last 19, the only defeat coming at home against Memphis.

Garcia finished with 13 points, Taquan Dean and Juan Palacios each had 14 and Palacios had 11 rebounds. Larry O'Bannon finished with 13 for Louisville, including 3-for-3 from three-point range.

Memphis (19-15), playing on its home court, came in knowing its only hope of playing in the NCAA tournament was beating Louisville for the league's automatic bid. The Tigers never pulled it off after winning three games to reach their first tournament final.

Memphis' Jeremy Hunt tied the game 71-71 with a free throw, but missed the second. Louisville got the rebound, but Memphis' Duane Erwin tipped the ball away from Dean to Washington, whose layup gave the Tigers a 73-71 lead with 42.7 seconds left.

O'Bannon answered with a three-pointer from the top of the key and Louisville led 74-73 with 27 seconds to play. He was fouled on the shot, but missed the free throw.

It appeared Memphis' last chance went by the board when Hunt was called for charging on a drive to the basket with 7.7 seconds remaining. Gianiny was fouled on the inbound pass and hit his first free throw. His miss on the second finished the way for the tense clinch.



Darius Washington hides his head after missing two free throws that would have won the Conference USA tournament title game and a berth in the NCAA tournament. Louisville won the game 75-74.

Washington had 23 points and six assists and Anthony Rice added 20 points for Memphis.

In Friday's games:
No. 6 Louisville 74, UAB 67: Francisco Garcia scored 11 of his 13 points in the second half. Taquan Dean, who shot 1-for-7 in the first half, finished with a team-high 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Memphis 81, South Florida 68: Darius Washington scored 20 points and Anthony Rice, shooting from long-range early, added 19 as Memphis (19-14) continued its run.

BY KEITH PARSONS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Finally, the North Carolina State Wolfpack can call themselves an NCAA tournament team. Maybe.

"I don't see a reason why we shouldn't be in," Wolfpack forward Iliyan Evtimov said. "I know that's what they're looking for, teams that can come through, and we just showed it."

Julius Hodge led a balanced attack with 22 points and Evtimov added 18 points and seven assists, helping N.C. State upset No. 3 Wake Forest 81-65 Friday night in the quarterfinals of the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament.

For the Wolfpack, the victory was particularly sweet, considering how they lost to the Demon Deacons earlier this week in the final game of the regular season. Justin Gray hit a tying three-pointer in the final minute, and Chris Paul beat the buzzer with a runner to win it.

But Paul's actions earlier in the game drew most of the attention. He punched Hodge in the groin, and was suspended by his school for this game for his actions.

"We used that as motivation," N.C. State guard Cameron Bennerman said. "Ain't no need to go out and sucker-punch somebody or take somebody out. That isn't necessary. We just wanted to come out here and win."

The Wolfpack (19-12) shot 51 percent and consistently beat defenders to the rim on backdoor

Kentucky routs Vols; favorites rout in SEC

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Southeastern Conference tournament always brings out the best in Kentucky.

The No. 4 Wildcats bounced back from a rare loss with a more typical performance in the SEC quarterfinals, cruising past Tennessee 76-62 on Friday night.

Kelenna Azubuike scored 18 points and Patrick Sparks added 16 for Kentucky, which has lost only three times in its last 36 tournament games.

This one was never in doubt. The Wildcats (24-4) had a double-digit lead before the game was six minutes old, and they stretched the margin to 34-14 after Sparks drove the lane with more than five minutes left in the opening half.

"We wanted to come out and play with passion, a sense of urgency," Kentucky senior Chuck Hayes said.

Kentucky, which already won the league's regular-season title, is going for its third straight tournament title. The Wildcats have won the tournament 10 of the past 13 years, bringing their overall haul to 25 championships — more than the other 11 schools combined.

Kentucky closed the regular season with a 53-52 loss at Florida, but there was no carry-over

five days later against Tennessee (14-17).

"You can't win every game," Wildcats coach Tubby Smith said. "We know that."

LSU 89, Auburn 58: LSU (20-8) stretched its winning streak to seven games and reached 20 victories for the third time in six years under coach John Brady.

Auburn (14-17), which upset Vanderbilt in the opening round, trailed 46-26 at halftime.

Glenn Davis, a 300-pounder selected as the league's top freshman, connected on nine of 11 shots, and scored 21 points.

Florida 80, Mississippi State 64: The Gators (21-7) are starting to look like a strong contender for their first-ever SEC tournament title after winning their fifth straight game. Matt Walsh made five three-pointers and Anthony Roberson and Corey Brewer hit three shots in the semifinals, which also held a 41-26 rebounding edge over Mississippi State (22-10), the league's top rebounding team.

No. 20 Alabama 69, Mississippi State 58: Alabama made a career-high eight three-pointers during a 26-point performance that pushed the Crimson Tide (24-6) into the semifinals.

The senior guard became the fourth player to hit eight three-pointers in an SEC tournament game.

N.C. State answers ACC Wake-up call

BY KEITH PARSONS
The Associated Press

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The Wolfpack (19-12) shot 51 percent and consistently beat defenders to the rim on backdoor



Julius Hodge celebrates North Carolina State's upset of Wake Forest in the ACC tournament.

cuts, with everybody getting a chance in their Princeton-style offense. Bennerman, starting in place of the injured Tony Bethel (groin), had 17 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

Eric Williams and Gray each had 17 points for Wake (26-5).

No. 5 Duke 64, Virginia 60: Duke assumed its customary spot in the ACC tournament semifinals despite a horrid shooting performance by guard J.J. Redick.

Redick, who came in averaging a team-high 22.6 points, missed 11 of his first 12 shots and finished 4-for-17. Daniel Ewing and Lee Melchioni picked up the

slack by scoring 16 points apiece, and Shelden Williams had 10 points and 12 rebounds.

Virginia (14-15) might have played its final game under coach Pete Gillen.

No. 2 North Carolina 89, Clemson 81: Raymond Felton got most of the credit for top-seeded North Carolina being able to avoid the biggest upset in ACC tournament history.

The all-ACC point guard scored a career-high 20 points and nailed a go-ahead three-pointer with the shot clock winding down in the final 90 seconds.

Since the conference expanded to nine teams in 1992, no ninth-seeded team has beaten the No. 1 seed. The Tar Heels (27-3) trailed by 13 points with about nine minutes left before rallying behind Felton.

Georgia Tech 73, Virginia Tech 54: Georgia Tech pulled away at the start of the second half to ruin the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament debut of Virginia Tech (15-13).

Georgia Tech (18-10), seeded fifth, overcame 22 turnovers to end a streak of 12 games in which it had alternated wins and losses.

"We've been struggling with trying to put wins together," said guard Jarett Jack, who scored 13 points. "I think there's been certain games that we've controlled the majority of and let slip through our fingers. Hopefully this weekend we can get some momentum and put some wins together."

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Reviewed by: Overseas GI on Feb. 14, 2005

Ramstein wins powerlifting championship

BY RUSTY BRYAN

Stars and Stripes

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Two lifters and the Ramstein team made the most of their chances Saturday in the U.S. Military National Powerlifting Men's and Women's Championships — held at a European venue for the first time.

Rhonda Clark of Fort Hood, Texas, a reigning U.S. national seniors champion at 165 pounds, collected her fourth military record in the deadlift, raising 195 kilograms — 429 pounds — from the floor to her waist on her second try in the event to give her a three-lift total of 946.5 pounds.

And the only person in the Patton Barracks gym who was not impressed was Clark, who competed Saturday in the 181-pound division.

"I'm a better deadlifter at 148 than I am at 181," she said, "but [her teammates] were teasing me that since I held the record for 132, 148 and 165 pounds, I ought to go for 181 and have them all."

Even that sweep failed to impress Clark.

"Put me at 148, and I'll set records all day," she said. "I'm a natural deadlifter. I have long arms, a short trunk and flexible hips."

Clark, whose outstanding female lifter of the meet, used her record lift to claim gold medals in the 181 open and masters divisions.

It wasn't enough for the Fort Hood Phantom Corps team to claim its 12th military team title in 13 years. U.S. Forces-Europe champion Ramstein finished the competition with 90 points, four more than the Texas-based lifters, who had to settle for second.

Horace Youson of Ramstein added the U.S. national military gold medal at 165 pounds to the U.S. Forces-Europe championship he won on the same floor last month. He said Ramstein used a team concept to win the title.

"We work out together three or



RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Ramstein's Samuel Strohm benches 347 pounds in the USA Powerlifting Military National Championships in Heidelberg, Germany, on Saturday.

four mornings a week," Youson said. "It really helps."

Youson was one of five Ramstein lifters winning gold medals on Saturday.

The others were 181-pounder Jimmy Scott and 220-pounder king Troy Saunders, who, like Youson, are holders of 2005 U.S. Forces Europe titles; 242-pound champ Derrick Baldwin, second at that weight to teammate Robin Riley in the USFE meet; and 275-pounder Willie Williams, third in the USFE meet behind a pair of Grafenwöhr performers who did not compete here.

Riley did compete Saturday and elevated the most mass of any lifter, 600.75 pounds in the deadlift, before passing on further attempts because of a sore

back. A zero in the bench press ruined his hopes.

Ramstein's U.S. Forces 181-pound champion Samuel Strohm, second in the category here, nonetheless was chosen outstanding lifter in the juniors division. Saunders and Scott won outstanding lifter trophies in their weight classes.

Joining them as an outstanding lifter was 165-pound masters king Carlos Lewis of Fort Gordon, Ga. Lewis was a 2002 national champion and 2003 national military champion before spending 2004 in Iraq.

The heaviest one-event lift of the afternoon went to Ramstein's Scott, who squatted 617.25 pounds in the first of three lifts.

E-mail Rusty Bryan at: bryan@mail.strips.osd.mil



RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Rhonda Clark from Fort Hood, Texas, declares a military national record 429 pounds Saturday.

U.S. Military National Powerlifting Men's and Women's Championships

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Top finishers in the 2005 U.S. Military National Powerlifting Men's and Women's Championships on Saturday. Results are in kilograms and are for squat, bench, deadlift and total.

Women

146 pounds—Troy Briggs, Heidelberg, 615, 22.5, 85, 200-0.0
165 pounds—Karen Youngblood, Ft. Hood, Texas, 100.0, 64, 120, 200-0.0
181 pounds—Rhonda Clark, Ft. Hood, 155.0, 81.5, 150, 200-0.0
200 pounds—Rebekah Lutz, Ft. Meade, Md., 130, 80.0, 137, 5-347.5, 201 Petrina Mannheim, Germany, 80.0, 70.4, 107.5, 257.5

Men

165 pounds—Horace Youson, Ramstein AB, Germany, 232.5, 152.5, 217.5, 562.5; Ken Hertz, Fort Belvoir, Ramstein, 145, 117.5, 145, 410.0
181 pounds—David Becht, SHAPE, Bad Godesberg, Germany, 140, 132.5, 162.5, 435.0

198 pounds—Jimmy Scott, Ramstein, 255, 160, 190, 220, 665.0
220 pounds—Troy Saunders, Ramstein, 242, 177.5, 220, 622.5
242 pounds—Derrick Baldwin, Ramstein, 220, 177.5, 220, 622.5
275 pounds—Willie Williams, Ramstein, 242, 177.5, 220, 622.5
300 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0
330 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

Unlabeled

197.5 pounds—James Collier, Ft. Hood, 197.5, 100, 220, 597.5

220 pounds—Carlos Lewis, Ft. Gordon, Ga., 220, 160, 220, 600.0

220 pounds—Cliff Mannis, San Antonio, Texas, 220, 160, 220, 600.0

242 pounds—Derrick Baldwin, Ramstein, 220, 177.5, 220, 622.5
275 pounds—Willie Williams, Ramstein, 242, 177.5, 220, 622.5
300 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0
330 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

360 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

390 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

420 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

450 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

480 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

510 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

540 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

570 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

600 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

630 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

660 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

690 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

720 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

750 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

780 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

810 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

840 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

870 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

900 pounds—Darrin Bette, Ft. Hood, 275, 192.5, 210, 580.0

Small Units basketball title won by Menwith Hill

Stars and Stripes

Forward Ike Nelson scored in the final seconds of the second overtime to lift Menwith Hill to a 55-53 victory over Gelenkirchen in the championship game of the 2005 USAF Small Units Basketball tournament on Saturday.

After a timeout, Gelenkirchen rushed the ball down court but guard Terry Hanton's three-point attempt hit the front of the rim.

The Jammers won their second close game in the five-day tournament at RAF Fairford, England. On Thursday, they won 59-58 in pool play.

Menwith Hill, which finished undefeated in the 10-team tournament, trailed 26-22 at halftime in the final, but rallied behind two three-pointers by Lionel Jennings to tie the game 43-43 at the end of regulation.

The teams each scored four points in the first overtime before Nelson hit his winner with 4.4 seconds left.

Nelson's 17 points led a balanced attack for Menwith Hill, which got 10 from Calvin Dixon, nine from Jennings and eight each from Karim Cheumt and Courtney Cunningham.

Connell Wright, the tourney's high scorer through three days of pool play, led Gelenkirchen with 22 points. Tim Teamer added 12 and Hanton 10.

USAF small units

RAF FAIRFORD, England — Final results of the 2005 USAF Small Units basketball tournament.

Championship

Menwith Hill 55 44 43 53 (OT)
 Gelenkirchen 53 44 43 53

Third place

Kefauk 103, Alcock 85

Friday semifinals

Gelenkirchen 55, Kefauk 48
 Menwith Hill 45, Alcock 39

All-tournament team

Frank Uley, Kefauk; James "Sam" McKee, Staveanger; Stan Wheaton, Fairford; Jacob Jennings, Menwith Hill; Mark Cave, Kefauk; Tim Teamer, Kefauk; Karim Cheumt, Alcock; and Connell Wright, Gelenkirchen

Time away pays for snowboarders

BY BEN MURRAY

Stars and Stripes

GARMISCH, Germany — A little time away from snowboarding may have benefited two top competitors on the opening day of the 2005 Chrysler U.S. Forces Europe Ski and Snowboarding Championships on Saturday.

Spec. Christopher Rawlings and civilian Simia Ranieri, who burned their way through the giant slalom course at Garmisch-Partenkirchen to win their divisions, both had taken multi-year respites from board-

ing. Of the two, Rawlings' return has taken longer. The New Hampshire native broke his neck while snowboarding seven years ago, and he has been going through himself back into the sport.

After competing in two races two years ago, Rawlings said he

was ready to go at Garmisch last year, but he was deployed to Iraq with his unit, Company B from Mannheim's 72nd Signal Brigade.

On Saturday, Rawlings was the fastest active-duty snowboarder on the hill, with a two-run time of 1:53.22, winning the men's open category.

"I thought the course was going to be a lot bigger, more aggressive," Rawlings said of a run that many boarders found too flat in the middle.

Rawlings' time was bested only by the fastest man on the mountain Saturday, civilian Matt Bush from Heidelberg, who won the men's senior division in a time of 1:47.61.

For Ranieri, the fastest female on two edges Saturday, this winter is the first one in a snowy climate since she left Montana for

Hawaii four years ago.

Ranieri, a Garmisch local and 12-year veteran of the sport who has some competition experience — she broke her nose in a race several years ago — said Saturday's run was "mostly just for fun."

Although her time of 2:02.21 was the women's best of the day, organizers ruled that since she is a member of the ski patrol she was ineligible to win.

As a result, all three women's categories were combined into one and civilian Marie Tucker, a championship regular from Aviano, Italy, was declared the winner with a time of 2:05.16.

The men's masters winner was civilian Bryan Schulte from Oberammergau, who had a time of 2:01.57.

Among those Schulte beat was 53-year-old Vernon Hodges of



Spec. Christopher Rawlings shoulders his way past a gear in the U.S. Forces Europe Ski and Snowboard Championships in Garmisch, Germany, on Saturday. Rawlings was the fastest active-duty competitor in the event.

BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Garmisch, who said he defines victory by a different set of parameters.

"When you're 53 years old, you're happy just to wake up breathing in the morning," he said.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Nicola Boretti from Garmisch won the girls youth category with a time of 2:28.87, and

Stephen Murta of Stuttgart took the boys title in 2:02.51.

About 80 snowboarders competed in races on the windswept Hahnsberg circuit. They preceded the second of the weekend's three events, the skiers' giant slalom. More than 200 competitors were entered in the slalom, which is followed by the slalom on Sunday.

E-mail Ben Murray at: murray@mail.strips.osd.mil

Gebhardt, Sorlie get to Anvik in Iditarod

The Associated Press

ANVIK, Alaska — Paul Gebhardt was the first musher to reach the Yukon River early Friday, yet Norwegian musher Robert Sorlie was poised to take the lead as the 1,100-mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog race wound up its fifth day.

Sports briefs

Sorlie reached Anvik six hours after Gebhardt, but holds a decided advantage because of the mandatory 24-hour layover period required of all teams.

Sorlie has already taken his layover, while Gebhardt was planning to take his break in Anvik. As a result, Sorlie could leave the Yukon checkpoint before the Alaskan musher and take the lead, at least temporarily, as the race heads toward the coast of Norton Sound.

For being first to the Yukon, Gebhardt made a luxurious detour, such as distinctly non-trail fare as braised musk ox, shittake mushroom stew and buffalo tenderloin with peppercorn sauce. He also received \$500 crisp \$1 bills.

Anvik is more than half way to the finish line in Nome. Race spokesman Chas St. George said the other top 10 mushers were bunched up coming out of Shageluk, farther back on the trail. All the top 20 mushers except Gebhardt have taken their layovers.

Sorlie already achieved one goal in the race earlier this week by being the first to reach the half-way point in the village of Iditarod, the checkpoint before Shageluk. He received \$4,000 in gold nuggets. Sorlie won the race to Nome in 2003.

Four-time winner Martin Buser, 46, of Big Lake reached Anvik at mid-afternoon Friday. Rammy Brooks of Healy was close behind him out of Shageluk, traveling 8.1 mph — the fastest pace of the top five.

DeeDee Jonrowe, in sixth place, was the only other musher to reach 8 mph.

"I'm all jockeying for position," St. George said. "Now it's a race. When you get to Anvik...you'll see the times speed up."

That's partly because he is the first of the race, the trail is not used locally and the lead teams have to plow through the snow.

Now the front-runners are getting into areas of well-used trails between villages.

Until now, St. George said, the leaders had been averaging 4.5 to 5.5 mph "except Buser. The main reason he's continuing to make good time. I think he'll be planning on a little split here."



Bill Steyer, from Fairbanks, Alaska, gets ready to head out of the Tokoten, Alaska, checkpoint on the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race on Friday.

toolkit and other villages along Norton Sound before the final stretch to Nome on the Seward Peninsula.

Rick Swenson, the only five-time winner of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, dropped out Thursday — the first time he's scratched from the race in 29 years.

The 54-year-old musher from Two Rivers officially withdrew after returning to the checkpoint at McGrath, 722 miles from the finish line. Swenson told race managers he was concerned about the well-being of his dog team.

"It's even more disappointing considering he's saying this could be his last race," St. George said. "The problem for Rick — he cares so much about his dogs. If he's not going to be a contender he's not going to waste their ability."

By noon Friday, seven mushers had scratched, including Cliff Wang of Lincoln, Mont. That leaves 72 mushers in the running.

The total purse of the 33rd running of the Iditarod is \$750,107.

The winner receives \$72,066.67.

Still no progress in NHL talks, but sides to reconvene

NEW YORK — There were fresh NHL labor talks with the same old refrain.

"No progress was made towards a new collective bargaining agreement," NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly said Friday in a statement.

The league and the players' association met for 1½ hours Friday in Toronto and expect to talk more next week. This session wasn't really for bargaining purposes, but more to set the tone for upcoming discussions.

The meeting that began around noon at Indian Wells, when both sides since Feb. 19 — three days after Commissioner Gary Bettman canceled the 2004-05 season.

Stenson shoots 66 for two-stroke lead in Qatar

DOHA, Qatar — Henrik Stenson of Sweden shot a 6-under 66 on Saturday in the Qatar Masters to take a two-stroke lead over Nicolas Faeth and Richard Green, while Ernie Els was five strokes behind.

Faeth of Sweden carded a 69 in the third round and Green of Australia had a 73 at the 7,311-yard Doha Golf Club. Els, the only

top-50 player in the event, posted a second straight 69.

Wetterlich leads Janzen in Honda Civic

PALM BEACH BEACH, Fla. — Brett Wetterlich shot his second straight 6-under 66 to take a one-stroke lead over two-time U.S. Open champion Lee Janzen after the second round of the Honda Civic.

Janzen, seeking his first tournament title since 1998, shot a 64. First-round leader Chad Campbell bogeyed two of the final four holes for a 71 to drop into a tie with third-round Darron (65) at 9 under.

Viay Singh, whose six-month reign at No. 1 ended when Tiger Woods supplanted him last week, was 4 under after a 69.

Aoki in front in SBC Classic

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. — Issao Aoki shot a 3-under 69 in difficult scoring conditions to take a one-stroke lead over Mike Reid and Champions' Tour rookie Mark Johnson after the first round of the SBC Classic.

Aoki, the 62-year-old Japanese star who was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame last year, had five birdies and two bogeys on the Valencia Country Club course as wind, thick rough and fast greens sent scores soaring.

Raymond Floyd, Des Smyth, Bob Gilder and D.A. Weirberg opened with 71s, and Craig Stadler, Jerry Pate, Mark McNulty, Tom Purtzer, Don Pooley, Keith Ferguson and Don Reese shot 72s. Hale Irwin had a 73, ending his string of under-par rounds at 11.

Clijsters takes another step in comeback at Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. — Kim Clijsters took another step in her comeback, defeating Shinobu Asagoe 6-3, 6-3 Friday in the women's second round of the Pacific Life Open.

Clijsters was the 2003 champion at Indian Wells, when boyfriend Lleyton Hewitt took the men's title.

Much has happened to Clijsters since then, including a wrist injury in this tournament a year ago, and a broken engagement with Hewitt.

Clijsters, a 21-year-old native of Belgium, underwent surgery on her left wrist last June. She had more trouble with it later in the year.

Newman takes pole at yet another track

BY JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Ryan Newman was the third driver to attempt to qualify at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Once he posted his lap, the suspense was over.

Newman ran a flawless lap at 173.745 mph in a Dodge Charger on Friday to win the pole for the UAW-DaimlerChrysler 400 and knock the track off the short list of places he had yet to master.

"That was pretty impressive on my part as far as just getting speed," he said. "I felt like I pretty much nailed everything. If somebody else beats us, it's because they beat us."

Nobody did. Newman, who has won 29 poles in his career, has now claimed the top qualifying spot at all but nine of the 22 Nextel Cup venues.

Elliott Sadler qualified second in a 1991 Ford Taurus at 173.712, and Jeff Burton was third in a 1997 Buick Wildcat. Kevin Harvick was fourth in a Chevrolet, but did not qualify with a full tank of gas as required this season and will have to go to the rear of the field.

He was followed by Scott Riggs, who will be forced to go to the rear because he changed the transmission in his Chevy.

Kurt Busch, the series champion and a Las Vegas native, qualified sixth.

In qualifying for Saturday's Busch Series race, Carl Edwards turned a lap at 170.951 mph to become the fastest driver to qualify on his car on the pole at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

UAW-DaimlerChrysler 400 lineup

NASCAR Nextel Cup
After Friday qualifying race Sunday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway
Las Vegas
Lap length: 1.5 miles
(Car number in parentheses)

1. (12) Ryan Newman, Dodge, 173.745 mph.
2. (18) Elliott Sadler, Ford, 173.712.
3. (16) Greg Biffle, Ford, 173.712.
4. (20) Jeff Burton, Chevrolet, 173.712.
5. (97) Kurt Busch, Ford, 171.865.
6. (77) Travis Kvapil, Dodge, 171.717.
7. (90) Casey Mears, Chevrolet, 171.557.
8. (17) Matt Kenseth, Ford, 170.842.
9. (48) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 170.848.
10. (5) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 170.836.
11. (24) Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet, 170.735.
12. (1) Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet, 170.783.
13. (16) Dale Jarrett, Ford, 169.932.
14. (48) Ken Schrader, Dodge, 168.886.
15. (41) Casey Mears, Dodge, 168.854.
16. (23) Bobby Hamilton Jr., Chevrolet, 168.817.
17. (13) Jason Leffler, Chevrolet, 168.806.
18. (9) Mike Bliss, Chevrolet, 168.753.
19. (6) Martin Truex Jr., Ford, 166.465.
20. (99) Carl Edwards, Ford, 166.258.
21. (14) Michael Waltrip, Chevrolet, 166.236.
22. (42) Jamie McMurray, Dodge, 166.199.
23. (20) Tony Stewart, Chevrolet, 166.173.
24. (11) Jeff Burton, Chevrolet, 166.125.
25. (40) Sterling Marlin, Dodge, 166.051.
26. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 166.029.
27. (7) Robby Gordon, Chevrolet, 166.729.
28. (22) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 166.676.
29. (27) Dave Blaney, Chevrolet, 166.503.
30. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 166.493.
31. (18) Bobby Labonte, Chevrolet, 166.345.
32. (18) Dave Blaney, Chevrolet, 167.937.
33. (21) Ricky Rudd, Ford, 167.711.
34. (8) Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet, 167.121.
35. (46) Kyle Petty, Dodge, 167.164.
36. (14) Michael Waltrip, Chevrolet, 166.631.
37. (13) John Andretti, Ford, 166.616.
38. (34) Randy LaJoie, Chevrolet, 166.767.
39. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 166.767.
40. (96) Hermie Sadler, Ford, 165.339.
41. (73) Eric McClure, Chevrolet, 165.279.
42. (29) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
43. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
44. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
45. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
46. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
47. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
48. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
49. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.
50. (14) Kevin Wallace, Chevrolet, 165.279.

Overall: Miller overcomes slump, wraps up title

OVERALL, FROM BACK PAGE

Miller then hit a three-month World Cup winless streak, although he did win gold medals in the downhill and super-G in last month's world championships, which do not count in the World Cup standings.

The American's 400-point lead over Raich in December shrank to 52 points entering this week's World Cup finals.

With the pressure on, however, and the season growing shorter, Miller responded with three top performances. He finished second in Thursday's downhill, snapped his winless streak Friday by sharing a super giant slalom victory with teammate Daron Rahalber, taking the World Cup super-G title in the process — and then clinched the overall with another podium performance Saturday.

"I felt like I was geared to race," Miller said. "I did what I came to do."

Miller began his career as a technical specialist, excelling in super-G title in the process — and then clinched the overall with another podium performance Saturday.

"I felt like I was geared to race," Miller said. "I did what I came to do."

technical problem. It's a matter of execution."

Schleper captures first win; Kostelic narrows gap

LENZERHEIDE, Switzerland — Sarah Schleper of the United States recorded her first World Cup victory in the season's final slalom Saturday while Janica Kostelic finished second to close in on overall leader Anja Paerson.

Schleper, 20, was teamed with teammates Lindsey Kildow, Julia Mancuso and Resi Stiegler in the finish area, where they jumped on top of each other.

"My teammates were really great," Schleper said. "I think I lost my voice screaming so much."

Schleper covered the two runs on the Silvano Beltrametti course in 1 minute, 29.13 seconds, maintaining her lead from the first run.

Kostelic of Croatia was 0.34 seconds behind and Nicole Hosp of Austria was 0.90 back for third. Tanja Poutiainen of Finland tied Austria's Ertl of Germany for fourth.

Paerson finished in 10th place and now has 1,359 points in the overall World Cup standings, 35 more than the season's second-place season-ending giant slalom to come.

Chargers cut Flutie; Favre gives fans good news

The Associated Press

Doug Flutie is out of job in San Diego, leaving the 42-year-old quarterback's NFL future in doubt.

Flutie was released Friday by the Chargers, who would have had to pay him a roster bonus of \$350,000 on Tuesday. The 1984 Heisman Trophy winner, best known for the desperation pass that beat the University of Miami that season, had two years left on his contract.



Flutie

Flutie was effectively fourth on the Chargers' depth chart, behind Drew Brees, Philip Rivers and second-year man Cleo Lemon, who the team likes as a developmental quarterback.

Meanwhile, two other veteran quarterbacks changed teams on Friday and Brett Favre delivered the good news to Green Bay Packers fans in person.

Former Miami starter Jay Fiedler signed with the New York Jets to back up Chad Pennington. Fiedler's experience gives the Jets insurance in case Pennington is slow to recover from surgery on his rotator cuff.

The Jets also signed former Philadelphia and Cleveland linebacker Barry Gardner, and Miami re-signed backup quarterback Sage Rosenfels to a one-year deal.

Mike McMahon, Joey Harrington's backup in Detroit, signed with Philadelphia, where he will compete with Koy Detmer to be No. 2 behind Donovan McNabb.

One day after news broke that Favre had decided against retiring, the three-time NFL MVP filled in Packers fans during the team's first Fan Fest.

Former Packer and broadcaster Larry McCarren opened Favre's appearance with the question on everyone's mind: "Can we hear it from your lips? Are you coming back for another season?"

"Yes I am," Favre replied as fans erupted in cheers.

"I still love to play the game. I still feel I can play at a high level. My wife said, 'Go back and play.'"

Flutie, who at 5-foot-10 always had to battle questions about his size, played for Chicago, New England, Buffalo and San Diego in the NFL. He also had an eight-year stint in the CFL and started his career with the now-defunct USFL.

His last start came in the Chargers' regular-season finale against Kansas City, when Brees was resting for the playoffs. He scrambled around, as he often did, and threw one touchdown pass.

Flutie could be back. "I think Doug definitely wants to try and play at least for another year," his agent, Kristen Kulig, said from Boston. "I'll be looking at what opportunities might be out there, with a team that wants



a quality backup quarterback."

Dallas suffered a setback when newly signed guard Marco Rivera underwent back surgery.

Rivera, who signed with Dallas after being released by Green Bay, underwent surgery to repair a bulging disk in his back just a

week after receiving a \$9 million signing bonus. He is expected to be ready for training camp.

Rivera had the procedure just a few days after feeling pain while jogging on a treadmill.

Rivera, who turns 33 next month, hasn't missed a game the past six seasons. Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said Rivera's durability was among the reasons he gave the veteran a \$20 million, five-year contract. He'll be the

starting right guard, anchoring the side of the line where Dallas struggled most last season.

Cincinnati released cornerback Dennis Weathersby, whose career has been sidetracked by a car accident and drive-by shooting.

Weathersby missed last season with a head injury sustained in a car accident in April 2004. Since then, he has been unable to pass the physical needed to return,

and the Bengals announced their decision to cut him Friday.

■ In other deals Friday: The Kansas City Chiefs signed former Miami safety Sammy Knight to a five-year deal.

■ The Baltimore Ravens signed former Pittsburgh Steelers lineman Keydrick Vincent to fill a vacancy at right guard.

■ The New York Giants signed another former Steeler, defensive lineman Kendrick Clancy.

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Filling the brackets calls for some sense

The few puffs of smoke emanating from the NCAA tournament selection committee so far suggest their room-service hot at a downtown Indianapolis hotel this weekend will be enormous.

Committee chairman Bob Bowlsby is already throwing around phrases like "it's going to be pretty muddy" and "I don't think it's a foregone conclusion," hinting that deliberations will be even more daunting than usual. And even that phrasing sounded decisive compared to this: "We've had

Jim Litke



Selection committee would do well to weigh more than statistics in seeding NCAA tournament field

a lot of shake-up in the past seven days," Bowlsby said. "In some ways, things have changed. In some ways, they have not."

In fairness, there are plenty more games to be played, and no matter what you think about the committee's handiwork come Sunday, keep this in mind: That room-service tab is the only thing that keeps college basketball out of the clutches of an evil cabal like the Bowl Championship Series.

A knuckleheaded decision on seeding — and there have been a few through the years — can make it tougher for a deserving team to win the national champi-

onship. But it doesn't take the chance away.

After the committee is through playing games on paper, they get out of the way and let teams decide matters on a court.

But that's not to say that the 10 angry men on this year's committee couldn't use some help. Because angry is exactly what they'll be until somebody opens the door to the conference room late in the afternoon and invites the TV cameras in.

So here goes:

Don't lose sight of the big picture. Worry less about who gets the No. 1 seeds and see to it that the rest of the veteran coaches

with good squads all get a good shake. That's all there is to it.

That means Jim Calhoun at Connecticut, Eddie Sutton at Oklahoma State, Mark Few at Gonzaga and Tom Izzo at Michigan State. At least one of them likely will be around at the end.

Don't fixate on what happens the next few days. For all the things that have changed about the tournament during the past two decades, the most reliable predictor of a team's success has been the experience of its coach.

There's plenty of anecdotal evidence. John Wooden was 54 when he won the first of a record 10 titles. Dean Smith, who still tops

the victory list, was 51 when he got his first, and even Duke's Mike Krzyzewski didn't turn the trick until he was 44. ESPN.com found that during the past 20 years, more of the same faces have been turning up, the most familiar ones have been going the furthest, and that gulf is only getting wider.

In 1985, a coach making the field, on average, was in for the third time. Last year, the number was six. Over the same time, Final Four coaches have averaged four more trips to the tourney — 9.5 versus 5.6 — than their counterparts in the rest of the field.

So get the upsets out of the way early. There are fewer and fewer, anyway, and they're impossible to predict. Spend more time plotting the road to exactly the Kentucky-Louisville match should take place, since both Tubby Smith and Rick Pitino have earned that much consideration and few games are more compelling than one that threatens to unhinge an entire state.

Next, think story lines. A month from now, nobody will care about all the thumb-wrestling that went on to determine any places below line three — except, maybe your orthopedists. What the rest of us will remember then — besides how much we hate the unofficial CBS anthem, "One Shining Moment" — is whether somebody deserving is wearing a cut-down net instead of a noose.

Last year, it was Calhoun winning his second national championship the day after finding out he was turned down by the Hall of Fame (he's a finalist again this year). Two years ago, the role of long-suffering coach and the national title went to Jim Boeheim, who likewise finds himself on the Hall's threshold. Both those outcomes should get the committee thinking.

The sentimental choice in last year's Final Four was Sutton, one of the game's living encyclopedias and the oldest ever to make it that far. Getting there was no small accomplishment. Barely three years had passed since the Oklahoma State basketball family was devastated by the crash of a private plane ferrying two players and eight other members of the program back from a game at Colorado.

If he wins it all, you folks look like geniuses. Even better if Sutton happens to face Roy Williams and North Carolina in the final. Two years ago, the almost-as-long-suffering Williams was in his final season at Kansas, arguably with the best of his many good teams, and got stuck playing second fiddle to Boeheim.

So get to work on that Oklahoma State-North Carolina matchup. If you can't get it done with a weekend's worth of deliberations at a nice hotel, we know you can. Those BCS computers don't take up much space and they never, ever call down to room service.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at jlitke@ap.org.

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SPORTS



Hawks win for first time in more than a month, snap 23-game road losing streak, Page 40

Miller time



Bode Miller clears a gate during Saturday's giant slalom in Lenzerheide, Switzerland, on Saturday, Miller became the first U.S. skier in 22 years to win the overall World Cup title, finishing the day with a 204-point lead over Benjamin Raich with only Sunday's slalom remaining in the season.

Overall World Cup title first for U.S. since '83

BY ANDREW DAMPP
The Associated Press

LENZERHEIDE, Switzerland — Bode Miller became the first U.S. skier in 22 years to win skiing's overall World Cup title.

He finished ahead of his only remaining challenger, Benjamin Raich of Austria, in the season's final giant slalom Saturday to capture the crown.

The last non-Europeans to win the overall championship were Americans Phil Mahre and Tamara McKinney in 1983.

"It's been a bit embarrassing it's taken so long. It was getting a bit like the Red Sox," said Miller, a New Englander.

"It was a bit embarrassing because it was like a curse."

"The last four years I've had a chance to win an overall," added Miller, who was fourth twice and second in 2003.

Miller finished second in the giant slalom, 0.68 seconds behind Stephan Goergl of Austria, who won with a two-run time of 2 minutes, 10.51 seconds. Raich came in third, 0.80 behind.

Raich's only chance to stay alive for the overall was to win and hope Miller finished outside the top 15. Raich skied before Miller and posted the best time to that point. The Austrian led held for four more skiers until Miller ended the suspense by beating Raich.

With only Sunday's slalom left, Miller holds



Bode Miller, shown with his overall trophy, is the first U.S. skier to win the overall title since Phil Mahre and Tamara McKinney in 1983.

an insurmountable 204-point lead. He has 1,608 points to Raich's 1,404. A victory is worth 100 points.

"It's done, it's over," Miller said.

Raich was left with the consolation prize of the World Cup giant slalom season title, finishing with a three-point edge over Miller, the defending champion in that category.

"I was trying to win the GS title today, but Benni had an amazing second run and that's what made the separation," Miller said. "I

wanted to win the GS obviously, but I won that one last year."

As overall champion, Miller joins such greats as Jean-Claude Killy, Ingemar Stenmark, Marc Girardelli, Pirmin Zurbriggen, Alberto Tomba and Hermann Maier, the Austrian who won his fourth title last season.

Mahre won three times from 1981-83, and McKinney is the only American woman to win. But Miller is nothing like his predecessors.

He is set apart by a rebellious attitude — he is threatening to start his own ski tour next season — and make-or-break style — he finished only one of eight slaloms this season, winning in Sestriere, Italy.

Raised in a New Hampshire home with no running water or electricity, Miller travels the World Cup circuit in a mobile home.

The overall was Miller's main goal all season. Skiers put much greater stake in the overall title than Olympic and world championship gold medals because the standings are determined over the course of a season rather than a race.

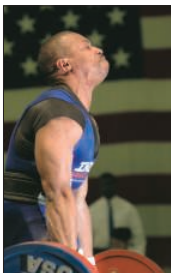
Miller set up his victory with an extraordinary start to the season, winning six of the first 10 races. On Dec. 13 he captured his only slalom victory of the season and joined Girardelli as the only male skiers to win races in each of Alpine skiing's four disciplines in one winter.

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Memphis' misses allow Louisville to escape with C-USA title

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Ramstein defeats Ft. Hood for national military powerlifting title

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Snowboarding kicks off U.S. Forces Championships

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Schilling unlikely to be ready for Opening Day Page 38

